

California State Archives  
State Government Oral History Program

Oral History Interview

with

HON. RONALD BROOKS CAMERON

United States Congressman, 1963-1967  
California State Assemblyman, 1959-1962

January 22, 1990  
March 1, 1990  
April 24, 1990  
August 14, 1990  
Fullerton, California

By Phillip Gianos  
California State University, Fullerton

A HISTORY OF REAPPORTIONMENT IN CALIFORNIA

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None

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## **PREFACE**

On September 25, 1985, Governor George Deukmejian signed into law A.B. 2104 (Chapter 965 of the Statutes of 1985). This legislation established, under the administration of the California State Archives, a State Government Oral History Program "to provide through the use of oral history a continuing documentation of state policy development as reflected in California's legislative and executive history."

Oral histories undertaken for the state program offer insights into the actual workings of both the legislative and executive processes and policy mechanisms. They also offer an increased understanding of the men and women who create legislation and implement state policy. Further, they provide an overview of issue development in California state government and of how both the legislative and executive branches of government deal with issues and problems facing the state.

Interviewees are chosen primarily on the basis of their contributions to and influence on the policy process of the state of California. They include members of the legislative and executive branches of the state government as well as legislative staff, advocates, members of the media, and other people who played significant roles in specific issue areas of major and continuing importance to California.

By authorizing the California State Archives to work cooperatively with oral history units at California colleges and universities to conduct interviews, this program is structured to take advantage of the resources and expertise in oral history available through California's several institutionally based programs.

Participating as cooperating institutions in the State Government Oral History Program are:

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University of California, Los Angeles

The establishment of the California State Archives State Government Oral History Project marks one of the most significant commitments made by any state toward the preservation and documentation of its governmental history. It supplements the often fragmentary historical written record by adding in an organized primary source, enriching the historical information available on given topics and allowing for more thorough historical analysis. As such, the program, through the preservation and publication of interviews such as the one which follows, will be of lasting value to current and future generations of scholars, citizens, and leaders.

John F. Burns  
State Archivist

July 27, 1988

This interview is printed on acid-free paper.

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## INTERVIEW HISTORY

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### Interview Time and Place

January 22, 1990  
Law office of Ronald B. Cameron in Fullerton, California  
Session lasted approximately ninety minutes

March 1, 1990  
Law office of Ronald B. Cameron in Fullerton, California  
Session lasted approximately ninety minutes

April 24, 1990  
Law office of Ronald B. Cameron in Fullerton, California  
Session lasted approximately ninety minutes

August 14, 1990  
Law office of Ronald B. Cameron in Fullerton, California  
Session lasted approximately sixty minutes

### Editing

Phillip L. Gianos checked the verbatim manuscript of the interviews against the original tapes, and did editing for punctuation, paragraphing, and spelling.

In spring 1991, the edited transcript was forwarded to Ronald B. Cameron, who did minor editing. Final editing, and verification of proper names was done by Shirley E. Stephenson, Debra Gold Hansen, and G. Sylvia Kouyoumjian.

Shirley E. Stephenson, Associate Director/Archivist Emeritus of the California State University, Fullerton, Oral History Program performed the final proofreading of the manuscript, prepared introductory materials, the name index, and all forms required by the California State Archives.

### Papers

No private papers were consulted for this interview.



### Tapes and Interview Records

The original tape recordings of the interviews are at the Oral History Program, California State University, Fullerton, along with records relating to the interview. Archival tapes are deposited in the California State Archives at Sacramento.

## BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY

Ronald Brooks Cameron was born in Kansas City, Missouri, on August 16, 1927. He attended Western Reserve Academy, Hudson, Ohio; Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio; and later studied politics and government at the University of California, Los Angeles, and Pepperdine University School of Law. Cameron earned a degree as a certified public accountant in 1954 and a law degree in 1973.

Cameron served a very brief tour of duty in the United States Marine Corps in 1945 at the age of seventeen. In 1948, he joined his parents in California. In November 1949, he married Constance Shook. The Camerons have a daughter, Victoria Brooks, and a son, Richard Malcolm.

Ronald Cameron began his political career as an assemblyman from the Fiftieth Assembly District in 1958. He served until 1962, when he was elected to the United States House of Representatives, where he served from 1962 to 1967. In 1970, he ran unsuccessfully for California state controller, which ended his political career. He legally resides in Whittier, California.

While serving in the California state assembly, Cameron served on several committees, such as Finance and Insurance, Public Health, Governmental Efficiency and Economy, and Military and Veterans Affairs. Interim committees were the Finance and Insurance Subcommittee on Prepaid Medical Care and the Public Health Subcommittee on Air Pollution. While in the United States Congress, he served on the Foreign Affairs Committee.

Cameron is a member of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants and the California Society of Certified Public Accountants.

[Session 1, January 22, 1990]

[Begin Tape 1, Side A]

GIANOS: Mr. Cameron, could you tell us a little bit of personal background information, please?

CAMERON: I was born in Kansas City, Missouri, lived in the Midwest most of my life, through prep school. I went to Western Reserve Academy in Hudson, Ohio, and [Case] Western Reserve University in Cleveland, [Ohio], after I was discharged from the Marine Corps. I was only in the Marine Corps for a very short time. I went in when I was seventeen, and the war in Europe ended while I was in boot camp. The war in Japan ended shortly thereafter, so they decided that they didn't need any more marines, and I decided to come home, so I could go back to school. I was only in the service for about nine months.

My family moved to California in 1948, I believe, and I came shortly thereafter. I was working and going to school in Cleveland. I came to California shortly thereafter and ended up in Newport Beach, on Balboa Island, and Corona del Mar. I lived there for two or three years, got married in 1950, and all of a sudden realized that I really didn't have a profession. I hadn't finished college. Lo and behold, I had a baby on the way, and I better do something about figuring

out how to earn a living. So I decided the first thing to do was to find a profession, and the easiest profession to get into at that time was as a certified public accountant. I did a crash study on becoming an accountant and became certified in 1953. We lived in Los Angeles at the time. I found accounting extremely boring, but it provided a better income than the jobs I had held previously, and it had a promising future.

In 1953 we moved from Los Angeles to Whittier, California, and I became avocationally involved in politics. I had been involved in the [Adlai E.] Stevenson campaign a little bit, the first Stevenson campaign. I don't remember what year that was, '52, I guess, in Los Angeles. We moved to Whittier in '53, and there weren't many Democrats there. It seemed sort of irresponsible to me for the community to be just Republican, so I became very active in the Democratic party trying to do something about it. I became the organization director of the California Democratic Council [CDC]--which was in its infancy at that point--for the Twenty-fifth Congressional District, which was, at that point, the largest congressional district in the United States in terms of population. It covered a huge land area. It had, I think, a population of about 1,200,000. That was because of the big growth that had been going on in the area, with subdivisions coming in like mad. It should have had a

CAMERON: population of about 480,000, and it was more than twice as big as it should have been in terms of the population.

I was just active in politics. Nineteen fifty-eight came along, and [Edmund G.] Pat Brown, [Sr.], was running for governor for the first time. He was then the attorney general of the state of California. We needed an assembly candidate to run in the Fiftieth Assembly District, and I thought it was possibly winnable, but I decided not to run because I couldn't afford it. My wife said to me, "Do you want to be an assemblyman?" I said, "Yes, I want to be an assemblyman." She said, "Then why aren't you running?" I said, "We can't afford it. It pays \$500 a month, and I'm earning about \$2,500 a month." She said, "Can we get by on \$500 a month?" I said, "We probably could, but I don't want to." She said, "If you continue to earn \$2,500 a month for another year or two or three, you won't be able to get by on \$500, will you?" I said, "That's true." She said, "Then you'll never be an assemblyman if you don't run now, will you?" I said, "That's true." So I ran and I was elected. That's it.

GIANOS: How did you come to be a Democrat? Does that go way back to your family origin?

CAMERON: No. My family, basically, were Republicans. My father wanted to live to be 200 [years old] so he'd find the real truth about Franklin [Delano] Roosevelt. He didn't live to be 200, incidentally. I just had, I suppose, what I think of as being

a social conscience, which is more compatible with the principles of the Democratic party than the Republican party.

GIANOS: So you were the lone Democrat in your family?

CAMERON: Yes. My mother was marginally Democratic.

GIANOS: [She] just didn't admit it.

CAMERON: Yes.

GIANOS: Just to back up a bit, what led your family to come out to California?

CAMERON: Economic opportunities, as far as my father was concerned. He was a vice president of Firestone Tire and Rubber Company, of their Aircraft Division. When the war was over, that division pretty well wound down, and the opportunities in Akron, or in Ohio, were not all that great. So he came to California and was affiliated with the aerospace industry here in California, in executive positions. I just kind of followed along. I was only nineteen or twenty when we came to California. After they had come to California, I stayed back in Ohio for one winter, then I said, "The hell with it."

GIANOS: Was the Stevenson campaign your first overt political activity?

CAMERON: No. At Western Reserve Academy--I went to prep school there--which was a bastion of conservatives. . . . Great school, I still support it, but it's politically not really anything that I'm in tune with. Anyhow, I got involved with the debate team there at school, and there was, at that point, a bill before the United States Congress called the

Wagner-Murray-Dingell Bill. It's the former mayor of New York City, [Robert F.] Wagner. I don't remember Dingell's name [John D.], but John Dingell is his son, who is now a member of the United States Congress. I don't know who Murray was. Anyhow, those three names were affiliated with the first proposal for socialized medicine in the United States, and I debated that when I was sixteen years old, probably, or seventeen years old. I had the affirmative, all the reasons why we should do something about providing medical care for the indigent in this country. Of course, the bill didn't go anywhere and still hasn't gone anywhere even unto today, although we've made some progress. I'm a coauthor of the amendments to the Social Security Act they put in the Medicare bill. I don't have the plaque up here. I've got a pen that [President] Lyndon [B.] Johnson gave me, one of the pens that signed that. I guess that's where my liberal orientation started, at that point, because I was given the assignment for the affirmative in that piece of legislation in the debate.

GIANOS: So when you got out to California, the Stevenson campaign was kind of a natural thing to do.

CAMERON: Right.

GIANOS: Likewise, the CDC.

CAMERON: Right.

GIANOS: Historically, the CDC is always described in terms of being on the left to liberal end of the Democratic party. Was that how it was when you were there?

CAMERON: I don't think so. I don't think it was left-liberal, no. In the Democratic party in California at that time, you had cross-filing. Cross-filing means that Democrats and Republicans could file in either primary without identifying themselves as Democrats or Republicans. As a result, the press in California in the early fifties was highly biased for the Republican party, in my opinion, and it was very difficult for a Democrat to become known and identified as a Democrat. The press wouldn't print the party affiliation next to the names, and that was the reason for, really, the formation of the California Democratic Council, to get an identity to Democrats in California. When you say left-liberal, it certainly was way left of what the Republican party base was, because in those times. . . . The [Republican] party's nowhere near today as conservative as it was then. It was controlled by people like Roy Crocker, who formed the Lincoln Club and was the owner, at that point, of Lincoln Savings and Loan, which subsequently has become such a disaster. [Laughter] But Roy Crocker's dead. It's not his responsibility for what happened to Lincoln Savings. If Charles Keating had not been in control, it would not have happened. Keating is a thief. Roy Crocker was a [Calvin] Coolidge conservative. I mention that as an example.

I said I really wasn't all that keen on accounting. In 1955, I think it was, I was hired as the assistant controller



of Bellridge Oil Company. Bellridge Oil Company ultimately sold out to Shell Oil here several years ago. But I was hired as the assistant controller of the organization. This must have been '56, either '55 or '56. I was, at that time, a member of the [California] Democratic State Central Committee in Los Angeles County, which was a very large central committee. I think there were 240 members on it or something like that. A guy named Don Rose was the chairman of the county Democratic Central Committee, and Don and I had some rather heated disagreements. He was a vice president of Coldwell Banker Company. They were strictly in commercial real estate business at that time. That's another one that's entirely changed. Sears, Roebuck [and Company] has bought it, and all that nonsense. But anyhow, Don and I got into a rather heated discussion. The old State Building is where the Democratic Central Committee met, right across the street from the L[os] A[ngeles] Times at First and Hill [streets] in Los Angeles. We got into a very heated debate. I have no idea of what the subject was that we were discussing; I've completely forgotten that. But it was before the committee, and I was fighting with the chairman of the committee. All sorts of parliamentary ruses were being used to get the floor away from me and all that sort of nonsense. The L.A. Times reported that the next morning in a front-page story, that Don Rose and Ronald Brooks Cameron had a heated debate in front of the Democratic Central Committee.

CAMERON: I had been working for Bellridge Oil Company at that point for, I think, six days, seven days. I had been up to their field in Buttonwillow, [California], for a couple of days before this, and I came back and had the discussion with Don Rose, had my little debate with Don Rose--the altercation. About ten o'clock the following morning--the county committee met on Tuesday, so it would have been ten o'clock Wednesday morning--I got a call from the chairman of the board of Bellridge Oil Company, whom I had never met, a nice little man named Whittier. He was one of the founders of Beverly Hills, [California]. They bought all of Beverly Hills with the idea that they were going to have an oil field there, and then they didn't find any oil. So they ended up subdividing it and made it into Beverly Hills.

Anyhow, Mr. Whittier was a nice, little, old man, probably, at that point, eighty-two, eighty-four years old. I had never met him. I had seen him driving in and out in his limousine with his chauffeur. I was invited to come up to his suite on the top floor of the building. I went up and was ushered into his office. He was sitting there behind his desk, and he was extremely pleasant, very nice. We talked for a few moments. He was pleased that I had joined their firm. He was looking forward to all the good work I was going to do for them. "And by the way, I read in this morning's paper about a Ronald Cameron who was in some sort of a discussion

CAMERON: with a Mr. Rose of the county Democratic Central Committee last night. Is he related to you?" I said, "I guess so. It's about me." "Oh, you're a Democrat." "Yes, I'm a Democrat, Mr. Whittier." "Well, isn't that very nice, very, very nice. So nice meeting you, Mr. Cameron. I'm looking forward to seeing you again sometime." Obviously, I had been excused, and so I left his office, went back to my office and back to work.

Twenty minutes later, I got a call from the controller of the company, who had hired me. They had put me through batteries of tests and two days in the hospital, even, for physicals that I had gone through to get this job. Anyhow, he called me and talked to me and said that it was really unfortunate that they hadn't done a very thorough background investigation of me. They had decided that really, probably I wouldn't be compatible with the Bellridge Oil Company. He had a check for me, and if I could just clean out my desk, I was terminated as of now. He was very embarrassed about the whole damn thing. He handed me a check, and it was for six months' pay. The largest amount of money I'd ever seen in my life, that belonged to me. It was delightful. Democrats were not looked upon favorably in those days, so that was the reason for the birth of the California Democratic Council.

GIANOS: So if anything, I suppose that just galvanized your commitment to the party.

CAMERON: Absolutely.

GIANOS: You said you had a conversation with your wife about running for the assembly and that you wanted to do it. Is there some point at which that desire really crystallized, [when] you said, "By God, I want to go to the assembly," or "I want to continue my activities in politics"? Did it just grow?

CAMERON: It was an evolutionary thing. There was nobody to do organizational work for the Democratic party in Whittier when I started. After months and months and months of every day, every night after work, working in political activity. . . . There was a chap named Richard DuBois, who ran for the assembly in that [Fiftieth] District, I think in '54, again in '56. I did a lot of work for him. He's deceased now. He and I got into some heated arguments over social security and other things. I got to the point that I felt that I was more capable than DuBois, whom I was working for and trying to elect to the assembly, so I decided I'd do it myself.

GIANOS: What was that district like at that time, in terms of demography and partisanship?

CAMERON: It was evolving rapidly because it was tracts; subdivision homes were going in. When I first started working in it, it was probably 55 percent, 58 percent Republican, and 40 percent Democratic, and 2 percent or 3 percent decline to state. There wasn't any Peace and Freedom party or anything like that in those days. By the time I actually won the assembly seat,

which was some four years later, I think it was probably 50 percent Democratic and 46 percent Republican, or something like that. But again, you had the problem of not having Democrat or Republican reflecting on the ballot. It was hard to identify yourself as to your party affiliation, and so people really didn't know who was whom partywise.

GIANOS: Who was the incumbent in those days?

CAMERON: I don't remember what his name was. It began with an E, but I don't recall. . . . He [Thomas M. Erwin] had been the incumbent in that district for about twelve or fourteen years. I tried to contact him. He refused to debate with me or get involved with me at all during the election. He treated me with utter disdain. My efforts to contact him were futile. Even after the election, when I tried again, nothing. He lived at the Sutter Club in Sacramento, as I recall. In fact, I know he lived at the Sutter Club.

GIANOS: How easy or difficult was it, as the case may be, to get the nomination for the Fiftieth [Assembly] District?

CAMERON: A little bit of a problem. Really, the nomination was controlled by who controlled the California Democratic Council convention in that district. Having been the organization chairman for the California Democratic Council and for the Democratic party in the area, I had a fairly easy go, I thought, of getting the nomination of the California Democratic Council. I would have all those club workers

behind me to get the nomination itself in the primary. We had a convention in El Monte, [California], which was the largest convention of any Democratic council by far. I think there were about 425 or 450 delegates from the Fiftieth Assembly District seated at the convention. There were four of us, I guess, who were seeking the nomination of the convention: a guy named Mike de Cruz, who was a schoolteacher in La Puente, [California]; a fellow named Dale Ingram, who was the mayor of the city of El Monte; and Jack Spears, a longtime Democrat and interesting person who was a florist in El Monte and had become blind as a result of diabetes. He was a real gentleman, and is now deceased, as is Mike de Cruz. I was also seeking the nomination. We did it on the basis of the low man dropping out if nobody had 50 percent. I expected to get 50 percent on the first ballot, and I did not. The low man, whose name I don't remember, dropped out. Dale Ingram and I were really quite close, as I recall. He may even have been a vote or two ahead of me on the first ballot, which was a shock to me. How can anybody possibly not want me? We had one ballot, and somebody dropped out. On the second ballot, I won overwhelmingly. So I had the nomination of the club movement in the district. I think Dale filed anyway. I just don't recall how many there were actually on the ballot in the primary in 1958. I've got a scrapbook somewhere that would tell me that. But there was no question, I don't think, in

CAMERON: anybody's mind that I was going to win the thing, because I had all the organizational support as far as the club movement was concerned. I won it hands down as far as the primary was concerned.

GIANOS: With regard to the general election, can you tell us a little bit about campaign financing and your strategy and organization, just sort of the whole structure of the campaign? It's a nice, simple question, isn't it?

CAMERON: I think, frankly, campaign financing today is obscene. My primary campaign, as I recall, the total cost of the campaign was less than \$3,000, and the total cost of the general election campaign I know was less than \$6,000.

GIANOS: Was that mostly CDC volunteer money?

CAMERON: No. We had a program called Dollars for Democrats at that point. It wasn't Hallowe'en, but it was some day. It may have been Labor Day; it probably was Labor Day. What you did was you got all the volunteers and all club members in the district to go out and go knocking on the door and ask for a dollar from every Democratic household. We were very, very successful. We split that money so that part of it stayed for the congressional district, part of it stayed for the assembly district, and part of it went to statewide campaigns. I don't recall what we raised in the Fiftieth District, but it must have been \$3,000 or something like that that got split up.

Somebody told me once, many, many years ago, even before

I ran, that if you're going to run a political race, you never use your own money because if you can't raise enough money to win the race, you haven't got enough support to win it. So I never put any of my money into a political race. We just raised it however we could. But we didn't need that much money, because we had people. I mean, we really had people. In the assembly race, I can't tell you how many volunteers we had as a constant, because I don't really remember. There were several hundred. But I do know that in 1962, when I ran for Congress, there were 1,028 precincts in the congressional district, and we had a chairman in every one of those precincts who had one or more workers working with them. We had a party, a luncheon, for all of them in 1962, and there were 1,900 people who we fed lunch to. We had three restaurants we had to take over in West Covina, [California], to feed that many people. Governor [Pat] Brown came to speak, and [Assemblyman] Jesse [M.] Unruh came to speak. I had Jesse at one restaurant, and the governor at one restaurant, and [Attorney General] Stanley Mosk at another restaurant, holding down the fort. Then, I had cars so that they all changed and went to the other restaurants, so that all three of them spoke to all my precinct workers. This was 1962. When you've got that many people working for you, you're going to win something. It was neat.

GIANOS: Was that a common phenomenon, the business about Brown and Mosk and Unruh?



CAMERON: They were the three big names in the Democratic party in 1962.

GIANOS: Was that something that was going on all over the state?

CAMERON: No.

GIANOS: Were you the only one who did that?

CAMERON: I was the only one who ever did that.

GIANOS: How did you manage to pull that off?

CAMERON: They were friends of mine. I had been in the assembly for four years, at that point. I didn't want to run for Congress, because I enjoyed the assembly. But after the 1960 reapportionment, they partitioned the districts for Cameron to run for Congress, because Cameron could win because he could organize. So everybody was for me running for Congress. I told them absolutely I wouldn't do it. One of the reasons I wouldn't do it is, what the hell? You're entitled to a pension from the legislature, but you have to be there for six years in order to be vested, and I'd only been there four years. So they changed the law, and they changed it to four years vesting so that I would run for Congress.<sup>1</sup>

GIANOS: [Laughter] It's nice to have friends. If we could go back to '58 again. In your general election campaign in '58, with the volunteers and with the Dollars for Democrats fueling it, what sorts of issues did you run on?

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1. S.B. 588, 1961 Reg. Sess., Cal. Stat., ch. 1466.

CAMERON: Boy. I'm finding it very difficult to remember what the big issues were in '58. One of them was reapportionment, as far as we were concerned. We had to get control of the legislature, which we did not have. In 1956, the Democratic party was a minority party in the legislature, and we were running on the theory that we've got to get control of the legislature so that we can do the reapportionment in 1960. I remember that was a big issue, as far as the Democrats were concerned.

GIANOS: But you probably weren't telling the voters that.

CAMERON: As far as the workers were concerned, we were saying that. [Luther Lincoln was the speaker of the assembly and a very conservative Republican. We fired up the partisan workers by explaining how we could improve all public services if we could gain a majority and do the reapportionment. This is what you talked about to Democratic clubs, not to Rotary Clubs.]\*

The big split was going on between northern and southern California as to the water problem. Then-Attorney General and soon-to-be Governor Pat Brown was campaigning on the basis of "we have to do something about water for southern California." At least, he was doing that when he was down

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\* Mr. Cameron added the preceding bracketed material during his review of the draft transcript.

there. He wasn't doing much of that when he was in northern California. But that was a big concern. Air pollution was a concern, doing something about air pollution. I don't remember, really, that there were any overriding issues. There must have been, but I don't recall what they were right now. I can look at some of my notes and refresh my recollections.

GIANOS: What sorts of contacts did you have with the voters? How did you go out and stir them up?

CAMERON: Just door-to-door type of activity and actually getting the workers motivated. How we motivated them, I really. . . . I should have done a little research. It's so long ago now that I just don't recall.

GIANOS: Do you have any recollection that it was helpful to you that in '58 the Republicans were sort of blowing themselves up with [Governor Goodwin J.] Goodie Knight-[U.S. Senator William F.] Bill Knowland business? Musical chairs, at least some disarray in the Republican party?

CAMERON: Yes, there was disarray in the Republican party. Mayor [George] Christopher in San Francisco and Bill Knowland had been fighting. I'm trying to think. What year was it that [Richard M.] Nixon ran for governor? That was '62?

GIANOS: [It was] '62.

CAMERON: Nobody could really figure out why Bill Knowland left the senate and wanted to run for governor. That didn't make a lot

of sense to anybody, as I recall. I just have no specific recollection right at the minute. I would have to look at something to refresh my recollection.

GIANOS: The figures I dug up indicate that you won 56 percent to 44 percent over Earl Riley in '58.

CAMERON: Sounds about right.

GIANOS: What was it like entering the legislature, number one, as a freshman, but number two, with a governor of your party and with Jesse Unruh riding fairly high?

CAMERON: Jesse wasn't riding really quite that high at that point, although he was instrumental in helping me, there's no question about that. Earl Riley was the one I beat. Earl's a nice guy; he's now a superior court judge in Los Angeles County. He's a gentleman, so that part of the campaign was pleasant. When I said I couldn't remember who my opponent was or who I beat. . . . That must have been '56, the chap who lived at the Sutter Club. I don't believe that Earl ran against an incumbent. I'd be surprised if he had. Or maybe Erwin retired and Earl ran. I don't remember. The Republican party didn't do that sort of thing, run against incumbents. Within ten days of the election, a meeting was held in Bakersfield of all the Democratic. . . . What's the word? We weren't members.

GIANOS: All members-elect?

CAMERON: Members-elect, right. All of the members and members-elect.

It was held at a hotel in Bakersfield. They came in from all over the state. What it was, was a ploy by Jesse Unruh and [Assemblyman William A.] Bill Munnell, who subsequently became a superior court judge, now retired. He left the legislature in '62 [and] was appointed to the court by Pat Brown. Anyhow, the two of them were cohorts. Bill had been the minority leader and Jesse had been the whip during the '56 session. They called this meeting in order to get commitments to elect a new speaker. They were supporting a guy named Ralph [M.] Brown, who was from Modesto, [California], as I recall. [He] subsequently was appointed to the court of appeal up in the San Joaquin Valley. I really wasn't about to be pressured into voting for Ralph Brown. I never heard of Ralph Brown; he never did anything for me.

There was a chap named Augustus [F.] Hawkins, who had been in the legislature, at that point, for. . . . An interesting thing about Gus: he had graduated from UCLA [University of California, Los Angeles] when he was twenty-one years old. He's a Negro chap, but a very fair-skinned mulatto and a diminutive man. He was having a hell of a time getting a job doing anything. This would have been 1936 or something like that. It may have been later than that. I don't know what year it was; a long time ago, anyway. But anyhow, he couldn't get a job, and somebody suggested he run for the assembly. He said, "Why would I want to do that?" They said,

CAMERON: "It pays \$100 a month." He said, "That doesn't sound like a bad idea." So he ran and was elected, and he's been in public office ever since. [Laughter] He's in the United States Congress today, and chairman of the Black Caucus. But anyhow, Gus had been helpful to me. In the primary and in the general election, he had been helpful to me. And also a guy named [Phillip] Phil Burton, who is now deceased and who was the assemblyman from San Francisco, had been helpful to me. Neither one of them were supporting Ralph Brown, so I said, "I'm not going to commit myself to anybody at this point." Another assemblyman-elect at that point was a guy named Tom Bane, who's from Tujunga, [California]. He's back in the assembly now. He was out for about ten years, but he's back in the assembly now as the chairman of the Rules Committee of the assembly. He and I were both first elected in '58. He also refused to commit himself to Ralph Brown for speaker.

At that point, Mr. Munnell and Mr. Unruh decided that Mr. Bane and Mr. Cameron were really not members of the assembly. They didn't want anything to do with us. They thought they had enough votes to elect Ralph when we left Bakersfield. In fact, it turned out that they did, but they weren't at all certain.

Finally, when the assembly organized on January 2 or 3 or 4, whenever it was in early 1959, Gus Hawkins's name went into nomination for speaker, as well as Ralph Brown's, and Bane and

CAMERON: I, and I don't remember how many others, voted for Hawkins. The majority voted for Ralph Brown. Then, Bill Munnell was elected as majority leader and Jesse Unruh was elected as the whip. The assembly was organized, and Mr. Bane and Mr. Cameron were put in one office together on the fourth floor, the least desirable office in the entire building and the smallest one in the entire building. Our committee assignments were something less than one might have liked as our penalty for not having voted for the speaker. Ralph Brown had nothing to do with it. It was strictly Jesse Unruh who decided to punish Bane and Cameron. It was interesting.

GIANOS: What committee assignments were you hoping for, and what did you end up with?

CAMERON: I didn't know enough about anything, at that point. I ended up with. . . . Veterans Affairs was one of the committees. I really don't remember. A couple of other inconsequential committees that I was appointed to.<sup>1</sup> Within about four months, my committee assignments all got rearranged and changed when they found out that I could actually be an operative. I ended up on Finance and Insurance, which is

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1. Cameron eventually served on the following committees and subcommittees: Finance and Insurance; Public Health; Governmental Efficiency and Economy; and Military and Veterans Affairs. Interim committees included the Finance and Insurance Subcommittee on Prepaid Medical Care and the Public Health Subcommittee on Air Pollution.

really where I wanted to be when I figured out what was going on. I was made a vice chairman of Finance and Insurance. What happened is a guy named [Thomas M.] Tommy Rees was one of Unruh's lieutenants, and they assigned my desk in the chamber right next to Tommy's so that he could watch me and supervise me and teach me how to do things. Tom and I really became pretty good friends. Vis-à-vis that, I managed continuing to be totally independent, nonetheless being a fairly effective operator. So Unruh wanted me back on his team. So my assignments all got changed around.

GIANOS: In what ways, relative to Unruh and the leadership, were you an effective operative? What sorts of things were you helping them with?

CAMERON: Hard to put your finger on any single specific thing. It's just that I had several people who were close to me and would cooperate, and they often would do things that I wanted done. When they found out that they couldn't beat me by bashing me over the head, they decided that they better try and get along with me is, I guess, what it amounts to. So we got along very well.

GIANOS: When you entered the legislature, did you have any particular legislative agenda in mind vis-à-vis your district or your own interests?

CAMERON: No. I was really interested in just the Democratic agenda as such--in liberalization of the body politic, making government



itself more responsive to the needs of the people--not in any real specific area. Once I got there, the answer is yes, I became very active on the Public Health Committee. Through that, I created the first legislation that had to do with air pollution in the state of California. We called it the Motor Vehicle Pollution Control Board, originally. I managed to get that legislation passed in 1960,<sup>1</sup> but I worked on it for two years prior to that. [I] had a big running battle with the California Medical Association. One of my great concerns was--and it still is--the concept of proprietary hospitals. I am of the opinion that hospitals should not be in business for making a profit; they should be nonprofit institutions and eleemosynary. I had a tremendous fight with the California Medical Association. In my reelection campaign in 1960, some 300 doctors in my assembly district wrote letters to every one of their patients asking that they not vote for me.

There was a guy named Carl Greenberg, who was the political editor of the L. A. Examiner at that time. He subsequently left the Examiner and went with the [Los Angeles] Times. A guy named [Richard] Dick Bergholz was the political editor of the Mirror. It's the Times-Mirror Company. The Mirror's no longer in business. When it went out of business,

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1. A.B. 17, 1960 First Ex. Sess., Cal. Stat., ch. 23.

CAMERON: Dick went with the Times. Subsequently, Carl Greenberg left the Examiner and went with the Times.

The legislature in those days only met for 120 days. It was a much better system than what we have today, in my opinion. But late in the 1959 legislative session, there was a luncheon held by the lobbyist for the California Medical Association in the Senator Hotel in his suite. It was held just before the Public Health Committee meeting. I don't remember what day of the week that was. It would have been Wednesday or Thursday, probably. The committee would meet at one-thirty in the afternoon. Ben Read was the lobbyist for the California Medical Association. He held this lunch for the committee every week before the committee meeting, and they'd go over the agenda of what the committee was going to do that day. An assemblyman named Byron Rumford, who was a pharmacist from Oakland, was the chairman of the committee. I wasn't the vice chairman; I think I was just a member of the committee. Anyhow, I had a bill up having to do with the idea of an interim committee to be appointed to study the advisability of amending the Health and Welfare Codes of the state of California to require that hospitals be nonprofit.

[End Tape 1, Side A]

[Begin Tape 1, Side B]

They'd go over the agenda of what was going to happen at the committee meeting. I had never been very comfortable with

CAMERON: the arrangement of going to this lunch, and I think I probably went every third week or so. I didn't go every week, as most of the other members did. I was just really never very comfortable. But it was an excellent lunch. It just didn't seem to me like a good plan to sit with them before the committee meeting.

Anyhow, this day I was going there--it was toward the end of the session--and I had this bill and I knew that there'd be some discussion about my bill. I went and I didn't arrive until late, probably twenty minutes after the appointed hour. Nobody was seated yet. They were all having cocktails, highballs, and that sort of thing. I walked up and I heard something about, "What are we going to do about Cameron's interim committee?" as I'm walking toward the door. The door was open to the suite, and the guys were talking. "What are you going to do about Cameron's interim committee proposal in regard to hospitals?" Ben, the lobbyist, said, "I think it ought to be tabled." The chairman said, "Well, that doesn't sound like such a bad idea." At that point, I walked into the room and asked what was going on. "Have you started on the agenda yet?" Everybody is sort of skitterish, and nobody wants to talk about what's going on.

Wait a minute. This was the day before. It wasn't the day of the committee meeting. It was the day before the

CAMERON: committee meeting because that afternoon I talked to Carl Greenberg of the Examiner and told him what had happened. I told him how upset I was about the whole thing and what had happened. Carl said, "You want me to print this?" He and I talked about it for, oh, twenty minutes, half an hour. I said, "Let me think about it. I don't know whether this is for attribution or not."

I went through the rest of the day and ran into Carl at the El Mirador Hotel that night. At that point, the top floor of the El Mirador was a bar, really very nice. It looked out over the top of the Capitol building. Carl was up there. I went up. Legislators all hung out there. He and I sat and talked for twenty minutes or so. I said, "I don't know. I want to think some more. Let's go for a walk." So we went down, and we walked around the Capitol building and walked around the park. I think we walked around it three times and talked and talked and talked. Finally, I told him to go ahead and run the story. The next day, the Examiner--it wasn't the Herald Examiner then, it was the Examiner--[ran a] front-page story about what had happened in that room and what my proposal was with respect to an interim committee on hospitals.

The Capitol building was a pretty hot place the next day. Everybody was furious. My bill for the interim committee study was not tabled; it was just not brought up that day and was carried over to the agenda for the following week.

CAMERON: I went home that weekend, and Tom Bane called me. I wasn't planning to come back until Monday noon or something like that, because we weren't going to have a session on Monday. I got a call from Tom Bane sometime on Sunday, suggesting that he thought that I ought to come back Sunday night. I said, "Why?" "Well, the Examiner's been running these stories every day, and things are pretty hot and heavy. An awful lot of people up here are pretty mad at you." "They're mad at me about what? Because I told the truth?" "I just think you ought to be here to protect yourself Monday morning." "Got any specifics?" "No, I don't have any specifics. Just be here, I'm telling you, Ron, just be here."

I got a plane out Sunday night, and talked with Bane about midnight Sunday, I guess, in our office. It seems that they were putting together a plan to recommend censuring me for my having disclosed what happened at this meeting. They were doing all sorts of wild things. I don't remember all the details of it. But they didn't expect me to be there. Man, they really didn't expect me to be there. So I waited. They called a meeting at ten o'clock, a special meeting of the Public Health Committee at ten o'clock on Monday morning. All the members were there. Byron [Rumford], the chairman, was in the process of making a motion before the committee to censure me and asked the committee to take it to the assembly floor, and I walked into the room. There was everybody, shocked. I

CAMERON: had not been invited to the committee meeting. I took my place at the committee dais, and nobody would move the motion. So that was the end. They would have done it had I not been there. But in front of me, they would not vote a motion that the resolution be submitted to the floor. So we had some interesting things going on.

GIANOS: Was the general issue of health--basically what you just said--one that caused you the most political difficulty in your terms in the legislature?

CAMERON: Oh, yes. There was a guy named Bernard Finch, a doctor who owned a hospital in West Covina. I knew his brother; I did not know him. But anyway, he murdered his wife and ran off with his nurse--one of the operating room nurses--and subsequently was convicted of the murder. I'm trying to think, why the hell is he in prison in Arkansas, because he was in prison in Arkansas. I think he was paroled in Arkansas. Anyhow, he was running a proprietary hospital in West Covina. One of the things that was going on was this unnecessary surgery that was absolutely unbelievable, and he was involved in it. I was talking to his brother, who was also a surgeon, and he said, "There's no way that you can prove whether surgery is necessary or unnecessary," to me one day. I said, "Well, you know, that's not what a lot of people tell me." Then he explained to me how, after you remove an appendix that isn't hot, you can make it appear hot so the

pathologist can't tell whether it was bad or whether it wasn't bad, and other techniques that surgeons could do. I was just incensed by the whole thing, and that's what got me involved in all sorts of battles with the medical profession.

Another thing that happened there that was going on at that time, and I was the sponsor of this legislation. . . . There were osteopaths and medical doctors in California in those days, and the MD's would not allow the osteopaths to practice in "their" hospitals. I felt they were our hospitals. So you ended up with a complete dual set of hospitals, one with osteopaths and one for MD's, which made absolutely no sense. The osteopathic physician, if anything, is better trained than the medical doctor, as far as I'm concerned. They have an extra year of school involved in their education, and they also have the basic abilities of a chiropractor as well as that of an MD. They can do residencies and have specialties and the whole bit, so it made no sense to me.

So I sponsored legislation and got it on the ballot to merge the two professions and make the osteopaths medical doctors and do away with osteopathic medicine as such.<sup>1</sup> We got that on the ballot. That appeared on the ballot in 1960,

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1. Proposition 22 (November 1962).

CAMERON: I think it was. It may have been '62. But anyhow, it carried. I'm a fair-haired boy now to an awful lot of medical people because of that, whereas I was a "no-goodnik" before.

An interesting aside on that situation. After I left Congress and did a lot of other things for a few years, I came home one day and I said. . . . I guess it was 1970, because I ran for state controller in 1970. I had the Democratic party nomination for controller. [I] didn't win the general election, obviously. So the day after the election, I said to my wife, "You know, I really should have gone to law school." She turned around and looked at me, and she said, "You know, you either start law school tomorrow, or never say that to me again." So I started law school the next day, in the middle of the semester.

I became an attorney in 1973, and I had an osteopath-MD who became a client of mine right after I was admitted to practice. He had gotten into an altercation with the Santa Ana Police Department over something. I forgot what it was. In the course of the conversation about whatever his problem was with the police department, he mentioned that he didn't have his medical license. I said, "What do you mean you don't have it?" He said, "Well, the state Board of Medical Quality Assurance has never issued the licenses to the osteopaths who converted to MD's back in 1960." I said, "What do you mean? This is 1974. Why haven't they issued the licenses?" He



CAMERON: didn't know, but he couldn't get a license. He said, "They send me a little card every year, but I can't get the certificate. I pay my dues and all that sort of thing." I said, "This doesn't make sense." "It's true," he said. "Come down to our meeting and talk about it." So I went down.

They had an association of the former osteopaths who affiliated with the UCI [University of California, Irvine] Medical School, and they invited me down to talk to them. I told them that this was absolute nonsense, that I'd get their licenses for them, if they wanted them. Yes, they wanted them like mad, so I filed a lawsuit against the state of California to require them to issue medical licenses to all these people, like the law said they were going to do back in 1960.

Of course, the attorney general [Evelle Younger] fought me on this. I couldn't believe it. But rather fortuitously, I picked the court that I filed the lawsuit in. I filed in Norwalk, and the reason I filed it there was because the judge who sat in law in motion in Norwalk in those days was a chap named Vincent Dalsimer. Vincent Dalsimer had been the director of the Department of Vocational and Educational Standards [Department of Professional and Vocational Standards], or whatever it was called in those days, under Pat Brown, and he had helped me get this particular piece of legislation on the ballot. So I figured if I could do business in his courtroom, he would understand the merit of my position.

GIANOS: I want to go back to the letter-writing campaign you mentioned.

CAMERON: That was a pistol.

GIANOS: Yes. How did you go about countering that in your home district, or was there simply a backlash against it?

CAMERON: There was, I think, a huge backlash against it. What I did was a mailing. They made a mistake. Ben Read, the CMA [California Medical Association] lobbyist, wrote to all of the physicians who were members of the California Medical Association and who were residents of the Fiftieth Assembly District, and explained what he wanted to do, asked them to write a letter on their stationery and to send it to him in Sacramento, and he would duplicate it. If they would just send him envelopes with their patients' addresses on it, he would put the postage on them and get them back down here and mail them. This took some doing, in terms of logistics and time. I knew this was going on. Three weeks before they went in the mail, I knew it was going on. I didn't know how many guys were doing it or what it was going to be about. So we put out a piece of literature late in the campaign addressed strictly to the health care issue and what the medical association was doing.

As I said before, Greenberg had run these stories in the Examiner. In the first story that ran about the committee meeting, Bergholz was furious with me because I had not told him about this; I only told Greenberg. So I told Bergholz

there wasn't anything I could do about it. We had done it in the middle of the night; it wasn't a press-conference type of thing. I was sorry he was upset that he looked bad because it wasn't in his newspaper. Bergholz, from that day forward, never mentioned my name in a positive manner. If he could find a way of digging me at the Mirror, and then at the Times, he did. But never was my name in his story in any kind of positive way. He had a vicious, vicious streak, as far as I'm concerned. When Greenberg went over to the Times, the two of them would fight all the time. Greenberg had run a story that had something good about me, and Bergholz would raise hell with Greenberg. It was really a bitter, bitter thing. But I was on the front page of the Examiner every day for ten, twelve, fourteen days when that brouhaha was going on.

The then-president of the California Medical Association [Paul D. Foster] invited me to his house to dinner—he lived in Pasadena—to explain to me the error of my ways. This was during the campaign. There were a number of doctors at the dinner. They wanted me to tell them what I was trying to do, and they wanted to tell me why I was wrong about what I was trying to do. We had a very nice meeting. It went on and on and on. Anyhow, I mentioned that to Greenberg, and that, of course, became a big story in the paper, that the doctors were trying to convince me that I was wrong. So then, this guy [Foster], who was president of the medical association wrote a

CAMERON: letter to the editor, to the Examiner, saying why the Examiner was wrong and I was wrong and everybody was wrong. That letter to the editor was several thousand words, and they ran the whole thing. It just became a big cause célèbre that went on for three months or so, and my name became pretty well known at that point in the medical community. In fact, even today you can go out and talk to anybody who was licensed to practice medicine at that period of time, and they'll remember my name.

GIANOS: So the effect of that on your constituency was, if anything, positive.

CAMERON: It was positive. I was a good guy. Every one of them liked their own doctor, but they didn't like him enough that they would allow him to pick their political candidates.

GIANOS: The figures I got on the '60 race in your district show that there were three candidates: you, a fellow named [Albert M.] Gilmore, and Travis Manning. Do those names ring bells?

CAMERON: Yes, Travis Manning. I don't remember Gilmore. Travis Manning was a Republican, not a Democrat.

GIANOS: I was curious about Gilmore, because according to these figures, you got 46 percent of the vote; Manning, 35 percent; and Gilmore, 18 [percent]. I couldn't dig up anything about Gilmore, and I wondered, was Gilmore a sort of ringer from the right or the left?

CAMERON: This is the primary?

GIANOS: No, this is the general, in the Fiftieth District in 1960.

It's a very strange sort of thing to see three people. . .

CAMERON: I would have to look. I've got information at home to refresh my recollection on that, I guess. Travis Manning would be [of the] Manning Beef Company from Pico Rivera, not a very bright guy. That's who that would be. Gilmore doesn't ring any bells to me. Why there would be three people in the general election. . . . It would have to have been a Peace and Freedom candidate or something. I can't figure how they could get 18 percent of the vote.<sup>1</sup>

GIANOS: That's what I was wondering. I just couldn't dig anything else up.

CAMERON: I'll check that out for you.

GIANOS: In any event, in the 1960 race, the chief issue was the . . .

CAMERON: It was all the medical stuff.

GIANOS: Were there any other issues, basically, as far as you were concerned? Or as far as the voters were concerned?

CAMERON: I don't think the California Water Plan was on the '60 ballot. I don't think it was on until '62. That was a huge issue.

GIANOS: Did you get any help from Jesse Unruh in this race, your old friend?

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1. In the 1960 primary election in the Fiftieth Assembly District, four individuals ran: Cameron (D); Manning (R); Gilmore (R); and Block (Prohibition). Cameron, Manning, and Block ran in the general election. Handbook California Legislature (1961): 494, 545.

CAMERON: No, not really. He was a lot of help in '62, but not in 1960. We were speaking. . . . I know, '60 was John Kennedy, for God's sake. That's what the whole issue was. We had the Democratic National Convention here in Los Angeles in 1960, and the whole campaign, really, was predicated on the presidency. Everything was directed to the presidency. Assembly, congressional, to hell with all that. Let's win the presidency with John Kennedy. That was the big issue, and we won it. We didn't win California. [Laughter]

GIANOS: Those things happen. Looking back on the two terms you . . .

CAMERON: In 1960, we chartered buses to go to the [Los Angeles Memorial] Coliseum because Kennedy gave his acceptance speech at the coliseum rather than at the [Los Angeles] Sports Arena, where the convention was held. I don't know how many buses we chartered. Everybody had to pay for their own because the campaign couldn't afford it, but I managed to get tickets for all of our workers. We chartered from several bus companies because no bus company could get enough buses for us in the Fiftieth Assembly District. Actually, I was still coordinating the. . . . In those days--and this is something that made it really easy to run a campaign--it was required that the congressional district boundaries be coterminous with the assembly districts. We had the Forty-ninth and Fiftieth Assembly Districts in the Twenty-fifth Congressional District, and I was the organization chairman for the whole damn thing.

So I was controlling who was running for Congress and who was running for assembly, and was coordinating all of that activity. I was doing this prior to the time when I went into the assembly and managed to do it afterwards, also. But anyhow, we chartered, probably, [buses for] 1,500 to 2,000 people that we took down to the Memorial Coliseum to hear Kennedy's acceptance speech. That was exciting.

GIANOS: I remember [that period]. You mentioned the proprietary hospital; you mentioned air pollution. Were there any other major legislative issues, successes, in your time in the assembly that you think are significant?

CAMERON: Not that I was particularly responsible for. Lots of other things were going on. We had the California water plan that I was a coauthor of, but I can't take any real credit for that.<sup>1</sup> The 1960 reapportionment was what we were all concerned about, and garnering the presidency, which we all worked very hard on. There was nothing that I can put my finger on that was pretty big that I was personally responsible for, other than those two things.

GIANOS: What was the nature of your relationships, individually and also regarding the entire assembly, with the Pat Brown administration?

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1. S.B. 1106, 1959 Reg. Sess., Cal. Stat., ch. 1762. S.B. 1106 authorized the development of a state water project. In November 1960, the voters approved Proposition 1, which provided \$1.75 billion to finance the project.

CAMERON: It was close, very close. He was a funny man. In fact, he's  
a delightful person, even unto today.

[End Tape 1, Side B]



[Session 2, March 1, 1990]

[Begin Tape 2, Side A]

GIANOS: Mr. Cameron, when we left off last time, you were reminiscing and telling us some recollections and stories of Pat Brown. Could you continue that, please.

CAMERON: He was a great governor, as far as I'm concerned. I don't know what particularly I can tell you about him. One experience that I had with him was great. We had him as a speaker at a fund raiser for me. At the time, the Caryl Chessman thing was before the legislature. He had been sentenced to death, and the question was whether or not he was going to be executed. Pat Brown agonized over this tremendously. Of course, I was opposed to the death penalty, as many others were. While all this agonizing was going on, whether the sentence was going to be commuted or not commuted or what was going to happen, we had this fund raiser. It was at the South Hill Country Club in West Covina, [California]. It was a dinner party, and he was the speaker. He had worked the tables and I had worked the tables, and it had been a grand party. Dinner was over. I had gone to the rest room. One of my supporters who was there came into the rest room the same time I did and said something about Governor Brown and

was critical about the fact that he hadn't made up his mind as to what he was going to do on the commutation of Caryl Chessman. I said, "Well, you know. Pat's a great guy, but he's kind of a tower of jello at times." At that point, the governor came out from a stall. We talked and washed our hands and went back out, and the program started. The governor was introduced, and he started to say some very nice things about me in the process of his address. He said he wanted to compliment "Assemblyman . . . ah, the assemblyman that's sitting over there at that table." He couldn't remember my name all of a sudden. [Laughter] I thought it was absolutely hysterical. Everybody else thought there was something clearly wrong. But he got even nicely with me that night at that time. But he was a great, great guy. During that whole Chessman thing, though, a chap named Cecil Poole was the governor's clemency secretary. He's now a federal court judge in San Francisco. Cecil was agonizing over it like mad, too, in trying to figure out what to recommend to the governor. He had recommended clemency, but it didn't work out that way.

But there was an assemblyman named Robert [W.] Crown, who was a really neat guy. He was killed in a jogging accident a number of years ago. [He was] jogging around his house in the [San Francisco] Bay Area. I don't remember exactly where he lived [Alameda, California], but he got run over early in the

CAMERON: morning while he was out jogging. But anyhow, Bobby was a bachelor, a hail-fellow-well-met, and a real partier, but he was a teetotaler. But he really loved the women. He had a grand time.

I remember one time we were down in the governor's office, and Bobby was there and Cecil Poole was there. [Assemblyman Jerome R.] Jerry Waldie may have been there, I don't recall, [but] there was some other assemblyman there. We were talking about the Caryl Chessman thing. Cecil Poole had the transcripts from the trials, all fifteen, eighteen feet of them. It was huge transcripts from the Chessman trial. Bobby said that Cecil should recommend clemency to the governor, and Cecil said, "Do you really know what's involved in this?" Bobby said, "No. But I'm just not in favor of the death penalty, and I think it's ridiculous. It ought to be commuted." At that point, Cecil reached behind him and grabbed a copy of one of the transcripts, and he said, "Just kind of leaf through this." Bobby looked at it, and the whole transcript was several hundred pages, and it was all about forced oral copulation. Bobby reads at it and reads at it and reads at it. Then he said, "You mean this is a crime?" [Laughter]

But Governor Brown was an excellent governor and a tremendous leader. I think of the California Water Project that he forced through, the highway program that he forced

CAMERON: through, and the building up of the infrastructure of California, the things he did with the mental health hospitals, the school program, and the California State University program, which he put together. The University [of California], Irvine, was one of his projects. It was just a tremendous infrastructure that he was successful in putting together during his tenure as governor. Of course, Ronald Reagan managed to destroy it during his tenure as governor. We're pretty well falling apart in California today, vis-à-vis what it was in the sixties.

GIANOS: Did you have much contact with [Edmund G.] Jerry Brown, [Jr.]?

CAMERON: At that point he wasn't speaking to his father. He was in the seminary. He was not around at all during the period that I was in Sacramento. He came into politics, basically, after I was out of politics. He was a rather mercurial kind of guy. What I know about him, I don't want to talk about.

GIANOS: Fair enough. I'd like to go back to the reference you made last time to Dollars for Democrats. Was a significant portion of your campaign money and the party's campaign money generated from that?

CAMERON: Yes. That was an interesting period during the party's history. It was before the "fat cat" types really managed to take over the party, and it was a grass roots thing. It was partly an outgrowth of the California Democratic Council and the club movement in California, which was vital from about

1954 to 1964, I would say, maybe a little later than that. Once Jesse Unruh became speaker, the club movement sort of died out because Jesse was a very heavy-handed sort of a person, and he didn't want grass roots activity, basically. He was a tremendous fund raiser himself and managed to get things done, in terms of fund raising, that the party had never done before. The grass roots activity took so much time, from the legislator's standpoint, just because you were so interpersonal with so many people that there wasn't a hell of a lot time left to be a legislator. Jesse didn't think that was good, and so, all of a sudden, instead of raising dollars one at a time, we started raising dollars hundreds and thousands at a time, and it just changed the whole concept of politics. It's one of the reasons I haven't gone back into it. I'm not as enamored of the way the system works today as I was at the time when I was really politically active.

GIANOS: I'm curious about how, when the money was raised, it was allocated. Was it within a county or a congressional district? You could raise X dollars and you had, let's say, two or three Democrats from various seats in that area, how was it decided who got what portion of the money?

CAMERON: Theoretically, it was done by the county central committee, which was the master planner for this type of organizational activity such as raising the money in Dollars for Democrats. I don't remember the exact formulation of it. The local club

was entitled to a percentage; the county central committee was entitled to a percentage; and individual candidates were entitled to a percentage. I just don't recall, at this point, how it was done. I know that we were very, very successful, in terms of dollars, in the Fiftieth Assembly District. I can't even tell you now, but I think in that one weekend, we raised \$26,000, or something like that.

GIANOS: This is the big party weekend?

CAMERON: One dollar at a time, yes, just knocking on doors. But how it was split up, I just don't recall.

GIANOS: Were there ever any disputes over that, or was it pretty much of a fixed scale: X percent there, Y percent there, and that was that?

CAMERON: There was a great deal more of camaraderie in the political activity at that time than there is today. Disputes? Obviously. There are always some people that are more avaricious than others, but I don't recall any particular bad feeling about that sort of thing. No, I would say not, not significant disputes.

GIANOS: Is it correct to infer from what you were saying before, then, that, initially, when fund raising shifted from the club-basis system to Unruh, basically, that, at least in the initial short run, the legislators were happy with that because it made their lives easier?

CAMERON: I think that's probably true, by and large. Their lives

became a lot simpler when they could go to a single source. There was a chap. . . . [Eugene] Gene Wyman was the chairman of the state central committee, and then he became a national committeeman. That's an interesting thing, too, sort of as a side story. But Gene was a very, very successful fund raiser, and one of the things that made it possible during that period for the Democrats and for Unruh and Gene to raise so much money was that there was a movement going on then called the John Birch Society, which was a real right-wing thing. There was also another, if you recall, the Christian Anti-Communist Crusade.

GIANOS: Fred C. Schwarz. I remember him.

CAMERON: Both of these groups infuriated, particularly, the Jewish population of southern California. Gene was a very opportunistic, very successful lawyer. The firm that he founded is still a very successful law firm in Los Angeles. But Gene was able to raise huge amounts of money, and he and Jesse were great buddies. They parceled out money in large chunks, and it made life a lot simpler. It also disrupted the club movement, because now the political leaders were not as interested in having a local base because they had another source of revenue to support their political activities. I think that was significant in terms of destroying the club movement in California. The irony of it. The Christian Anti-Communist Crusade destroyed the grass roots Democratic

political activity. It really did. It was really odd.

[Laughter]

I was trying to say there was a fun thing. I really didn't particularly want to go to Congress, which I did in 1962 as a result of the '60 reapportionment. I ran for Congress. Immediately following the election, there was a lot of consideration that Jesse was going to be appointed by President Kennedy as postmaster general, and he really wanted the job. It didn't work out that way. The FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation] reports on Jesse on some of his chicanery, things that made him so lovable, wouldn't look very good in terms of a presidential appointment. So that's what scuttled him in terms of that. It's too bad, because he would have been great.

But anyhow, immediately following the election, we picked up, as I recall. . . . Kennedy didn't carry California, but we picked up either six or eight--I think it was eight--new Democratic congressional seats in the 1962 election.<sup>1</sup> Wyman and Unruh and I were all great friends, and so the three of us went back to Washington, [D.C.], to see President Kennedy and tell him all the good things we had done out here--you know,

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1. The 1960 California House delegation consisted of sixteen Democrats and fourteen Republicans. The 1962 delegation consisted of twenty-three Democrats and fifteen Republicans. California Roster 1960; California Roster 1964.



CAMERON: take credit for what we had done in the election, basically is what it amounts to, even if we hadn't given him the electoral vote. Of course, at that point, Fred Dutton was the administrative assistant to President Kennedy, and Fred had been executive secretary to Governor Brown, so Fred was a buddy of ours, too. We went back there, and we had an appointment with the president at, I don't recall, eleven-thirty in the morning or something like that. We made an appointment to see Bobby; [Robert F.] Bobby Kennedy was attorney general at that time. We made an appointment to see him at nine-thirty in the morning or so. The three of us got to Bobby's office. He had drawings that his kids had done all over the walls. It was a very impressive office, and he was informal about the whole thing. We had a grand visit. We were all patting ourselves on the back about the wonderful things we did in California. He said, "You have an appointment with the president, don't you?" "Yes, we're supposed to be at the White House at eleven-thirty." Bobby looked at his watch, and he said, "Well, it's getting close to eleven o'clock. You probably better be on your way. How are you going to get there?" "Probably just grab a cab." "Oh, no, no. I'll get you a car." He picked up the phone and told someone to have a car down at the curb for us. We left his offices and walked down the hall and down the public elevator. We were going out the door of the Department of

CAMERON: Justice, and here comes Bobby. He'd come down the attorney general's private elevator, and we ended up in the vestibule going out into the street at the same time. There was a limousine there, and a driver standing with the door open. Jesse and Gene and I started heading for the limousine, thanking Bobby for getting a car for us. Bobby said, "No." "No what?" "The car back there is for you," a standard sedan with a driver. But it was a standard automobile, not a limousine. He said, "When your brother's president, you get this one. Now, you get that one." [Laughter] It has stuck with me over the years, and it's kind of a fun thing.

GIANOS: Rank has its privileges, doesn't it?

CAMERON: It certainly does.

GIANOS: You were a delegate to the '60 Democratic National Convention. Any recollections of that?

CAMERON: Yes. I was not a Kennedy delegate, frankly. I was for Stuart Symington, and [James] Jim Symington was there. I remember lots of things happened at that convention. Unruh and Brown, of course, were for Kennedy, and the delegation, basically, was for Kennedy. I, ultimately, ended up voting for him, because Symington wasn't going anywhere. So I ended up voting for Kennedy also. But during the preamble of the thing, I was a Symington delegate. There was a congressman from the district that I was from--it was George [A.] Kasem, at that point--who wasn't for Kennedy, either. I don't remember,

though, who he was supporting. But I remember a real rhubarb when he threw his delegate badge in Governor Brown's face on the convention floor and stormed out of the floor because of Brown's arm twisting for Kennedy. It was a fun convention, though.

I think I mentioned before that when Kennedy gave his acceptance speech at the coliseum, we had thousands of people that filled the coliseum. We had bus after bus after bus that came from what was then the Twenty-fifth Congressional District and the Fiftieth Assembly District that I represented. Hundreds of people managed to get down there to the acceptance speech he gave at the coliseum. It was a very, very exciting period, really neat.

GIANOS: To get back to the assembly, I'd like to go over with you some general topics that sort of come up when one talks about legislatures and legislators, and see how you respond to them in terms of your experience. Some of this, I think you probably, to some extent, dealt with before, so if we're redundant, I guess we'll be redundant as far as the record's concerned. What about your relationship with the legislative leadership, both majority and minority?

CAMERON: We didn't have any real relationship with the minority. [Joseph C.] Joe Shell was the minority leader. Joe was in the oil business; his family had been in the oil business quite awhile. He lived in Bel Air, [California]. He was kind of

bullheaded, it seemed to me. The Republican leadership was not very effective, as far as the assembly was concerned. When I first went in there, Bill Munnell was the majority leader, and Jesse Unruh was, in essence, a whip. Ralph Brown was the speaker. I was very friendly and close with all of them, got along well with all of them. Probably the reason I got along with them so well is that they couldn't believe a Democrat won in Whittier. It never happened before, so that was a good thing. The fact that I didn't vote for Ralph Brown as speaker but rather I voted for Gus Hawkins was a problem for the first several months that I was there. I was kind of ostracized, but I managed to work my way back into good shape, and by the time the first session was over, I was well received by all of the leadership.

GIANOS: How did you work your way back in?

CAMERON: They assigned a guy named Tom Rees, who was very close with Jesse and he had been for years, to watch over me to make sure that I straightened out. Tom Rees and I, our seats were together on the assembly floor. Tom got to the point where he liked me, and he told them Cameron's a guy of his word. He started to ease me back into the situation. A guy named [Richard T.] Dick Hanna sat directly behind me. He was always sort of a loner, but a tremendous strategist. I learned more from him about how to manipulate the system than I did from anybody else, and that also helped me get involved in the leadership to some extent.

GIANOS: What were your lessons about how to manipulate the system?

CAMERON: Nothing that you could really put your finger on. It was just a question of making sure that you were honest with everybody. That's the number one thing, that your word is good, that you're honest with yourself and everybody else, and have the courage of your convictions. It's not something that you can really put your finger on. I can't think of the word. There's just a certain camaraderie that people in the leadership and the legislative body have, and I think it's true of any legislative body. Those who don't have it and feel it don't really get anything done. It's like the Phil Burtons of the world. Phil was one of the most liked guys I've ever known in all my life, a tremendous organizer in terms of political strategy from the standpoint of reapportionment. But in terms of getting anything else done, Phil managed to alienate everybody so badly that he never got anything done. Everybody would turn to him, in terms of how we make a Democratic district out of a Republican district, and he could figure out how to do it. He could figure out how to draw the lines and that would make them legal, but in terms of getting anything specifically done that he wanted done, he had a very difficult time because he managed to alienate everybody so many times.

GIANOS: Do you have any recollection during the time you were in the assembly of issues in which you [and] your district planned to go in one direction and you were under pressure from the

leadership to vote otherwise? Or were you pretty much in sync with the leadership?

CAMERON: That's one of the reasons I was defeated for reelection, because I had always been very independent and I did what I thought was right; I've always done what I thought was right. Quite frankly, that was not what my district wanted most of the time. So I managed to alienate everybody over a period of time. The answer is no, I was not pressured. One of the reasons I got along well in the legislature was that they knew there was no point in pressuring me, that I was going to vote the way I was going to vote. I would tell them up front what my position was on an issue, so I never really had a problem. I had a problem once with Carl Albert when I was in the Congress. I was not there, and he paired my vote the wrong way, and I had a real knockdown, drag out with Carl Albert. But I never had that problem when I was in the state legislature.

GIANOS: If you were in sync with the assembly leadership . . .

CAMERON: I was philosophically in agreement. On 85 percent of the legislation, I would say, something like that, because, philosophically, we thought the same way. But on those issues where I felt differently, I was not pressured to go along.

GIANOS: How about you vis-à-vis your constituents?

CAMERON: I had a problem there, because I'm much more liberal than my constituency was. As I said, they were shocked that a

Democrat won in Whittier. That was true for the entire eight years that I represented that community.

One thing I did, one that helped to defeat me, was that [I published all of my votes]. In the assembly this was not true, but when I was in Congress, I was the first congressman to publish my every vote. I mean, literally, every vote. It got to the point where it would be a pain in the neck to take an hour to go over [to the Capitol to vote] on an issue when the vote was going to be 385 to 0, or 415 to 0. I just wouldn't take an hour out of my life to go do that. As a result, my voting record was probably 82 percent or something like that in which I showed up for the votes, because I did not show up for ones where there was no debate, no issue, really. I had other things that were more important to do in terms of serving my constituency. But I consciously came to the conclusion that this wasn't fair to the people back home, because they didn't know how I was going to vote on something. So what I started doing was publishing about every six weeks or eight weeks, my voting record on how I actually did vote and what the issue was. On those votes that I did not make, I published how I would have voted, and I published where I was at the time the vote was taken. So I had a record on every single vote during the time that I was in Congress that was a public record. Of course, it was used against me tremendously. It's very difficult to find out how congressmen

CAMERON: have voted on issues, by and large; but it wasn't difficult to find mine, because I published it in the Congressional Record and sent copies of the thing throughout the district. So over a period of years, everybody could find some vote that I had made that they disagreed with, and that's the one that they obviously remembered. [Laughter]

GIANOS: Did the small papers back in the district publish this?

CAMERON: Oh, yes, indeed. [Laughter] I still think it ought to be done. I think it's right, and I think the constituency is entitled to know how a legislator votes and what he thinks and what he does. I would not do it differently. I was criticized by everybody in government for doing it originally, and a lot of guys said, "You're putting pressure on us. You're going to make us do this sort of thing." I got defeated, so they never had to do it. But I think it's right; I think it should be done.

GIANOS: Would you do it again?

CAMERON: Yes, sure. As I say, one of the reasons I'm no longer in politics is because I'm too up front.

GIANOS: What were the issues, broadly or specifically, that separated you most, do you think, from your constituents over the years? Where were you most out of whack with them or they with you?

CAMERON: The John Birch Society was a huge, huge organization in my district, and, of course, I was very outspoken about that.



The San Gabriel Valley Tribune and the [Whittier] Daily News were the only two newspapers. . . . No, that's not true. There was a weekly newspaper in El Monte that was partly in my district [the El Monte Herald], because the El Monte area had the largest number of Democrats. It was probably 75 [percent] to 80 percent Democratic in that whole general area, so that weekly newspaper had a real significant impact on the district. The paper was owned by--I don't recall the gentleman's name--a rock-ribbed, hard-core Republican, whom I refused to introduce a congratulatory resolution for in the state legislature because I just couldn't subscribe to his political philosophy. The California Newspaper Association had asked me to do it because I was his assemblyman. I don't recall what the occasion was. It was on his fiftieth anniversary as publisher of a newspaper or some damned fool thing. I refused to do it. From then on, I was sort of persona non grata in that newspaper, and anybody who had anything bad to say about me got published very regularly.

GIANOS: Is that the paper you were referring to last time that you said supported [Charles] Wiggins?

CAMERON: Right. But you don't introduce congratulatory resolutions for people if you don't believe in what they say. That's why I say that's the area in which I was apart from my constituency. If I could sit down with people on a one-on-one basis, I never had any problem with virtually anybody in the

district. When somebody finds out that I refused to introduce that sort of a resolution for this sort of a man, who was a pillar of the community, it makes the community mad.

GIANOS: What was your local setup in the district, in terms of a staff?

CAMERON: We didn't have staff back in those days. My goodness. When I went to the assembly, the salary was \$500 a month. You had a secretary during the legislative session in Sacramento. When you were in session, you had a secretary that you would draw from the pool, or you hired whomever you wanted. But normally you drew them out of the secretarial pool up there, because they were people who had been around for a long time and knew what was going on and you didn't know anything when you walked in the door.

GIANOS: So there was no local presence of your office in the district.

CAMERON: Not at the time that I was first elected. During the first session that I was there, they set up a program where. . . . I think it started in April or May 1959. You were given an allowance of \$500 per month. This was actually after the legislative session, because the legislative session in those days was 120 days during the odd-numbered year. After the 120 days, you had \$500 to be used to support a legislative office in your district. You could allocate that [money] any way you chose to do it, except that none of the money could be paid to you.

What I did was I hired a part-time secretary who had been

a volunteer during my campaign whose name was Ruth Millspaugh. She was with me from then during my entire eight years in public office, then she stayed with me for about four years after that. She was with me for about twelve years. She had been a volunteer in our political organization for two or three years before that. We had been close. I shared an office with a chap named James McKechnie, who is now a municipal court judge in Whittier. As I recall, I paid \$75 a month rent, Ruth got \$240 or \$270 a month, and the balance was used to pay the local telephone bill and that sort of thing. During the four years that I was in the assembly, there was no increase in that amount of money. You got \$500 a month to run your office and you got \$500 in salary, and that was it. No, that's not true. You got one round trip to Sacramento at--I've forgotten how they computed it--so many cents per mile, which was what a railroad ticket would cost. One round trip per legislative session. We got \$17 per diem while we were in Sacramento while the legislature was in session. And that was it. Jesse changed all that over a period of years, and started staffing and transportation and providing automobiles. Frankly, I think the legislature has not done nearly so well since it has been so heavily staffed as it did in the old days when we had, basically, citizen legislators. The point is, it was not a career, by and large, in those days. It was a question of, most of us who were there were

CAMERON: doing it at a personal sacrifice. That is no longer the case. Most of the guys that are in the legislature today, both in the Congress and in the assembly, it seems to me, are earning more money there than they're worth on the outside. But that was not true in those days.

GIANOS: I've heard more than one person say that sort of thing about the change that you're talking about. How often did you visit your district in those days?

CAMERON: During the session?

GIANOS: Yes.

CAMERON: About every third weekend, because there was no way I could get there. I had to drive; I couldn't afford to fly. During the last year that I was in the legislature, I had made good friends with a lobbyist whose name was Freddy Zweback who had been very active in the club movement in the past and then became a lobbyist.

GIANOS: For whom?

CAMERON: He represented the California Court Reporters. I don't remember any of his other clients. He did special assignments on special bills, and that type of thing. Freddy was really a neat, neat guy. He had a Cessna 210, so I'd bum a ride from him, periodically. So I got down more, because he would come home every weekend. It was just a four-place airplane, but if he had a free spot, he'd give me a call and say, "You want to go home this weekend?" So I would do that.

Funny aside about Freddy. Bruce Sumner was a superior court judge here in Orange County. He recently retired. Bruce was an assemblyman at the same time I was; he was a Republican representing Orange County. He had the same kind of problems that I had, because Bruce was never really a Republican philosophically. He subsequently has become a Democrat and was the chairman of the Democratic party in Orange County a few years ago. But Bruce went to the University of Minnesota. When he graduated from law school, he was a deputy district attorney in either Minneapolis or Saint Paul. We had a chap, a militant little bastard. What the hell was his name? He had a bill on the assembly floor calling for the death penalty for the sale of marijuana. I'll think of his name in a minute. I couldn't believe that bill.

GIANOS: Was it an Orange County assemblyman?

CAMERON: No. He's from Santa Cruz or Santa Clara, somewhere up in the central part of the state.<sup>1</sup> [Louis P.] Lou Francis was his name. He was just a miserable bastard.

GIANOS: But how do you really feel about him?

CAMERON: Bruce and I got to talking about this bill. Francis had a lot of support for that bill. I think ultimately it was defeated by a huge majority. But it was a difficult thing: marijuana

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1. Louis Francis represented the San Mateo area.

was a big issue in California in the late fifties. Anyhow, Bruce told me the story that when he was a deputy DA [district attorney] in Minnesota, he had to prosecute a case. The fact situation was this: there was a guy who was captain of the football team, student body president, all this sort of thing. But he came from the wrong side of the tracks. The family had no stature in the community at all. He was enamored of a girl and she was enamored of him. The girl was the daughter of some high-muckety-muck in the community. The parents of the daughter had forbidden her to have anything to do with this guy, who was a student body leader at the high school. They had lunch together every day. The girl started badgering the guy. She wanted some marijuana cigarettes, and he told her to forget it, no way. "No, I'm not going to get you marijuana cigarettes." This went on for a period of several weeks. They had lunch one day, and while sitting there in the cafeteria together, she said, "Well, where's my marijuana?" "What do you mean, where's your marijuana?" She said, "I gave you that dollar yesterday, and you said you were going to get me some cigarettes." He says, "You didn't give me a dollar." She said, "I put the change on your tray yesterday." He said, "Oh, for God's sake."

[End Tape 2, Side A]

[Begin Tape 2, Side B]

CAMERON: He ended up getting her three marijuana cigarettes the next day. Whether she smoked them or not, I don't know, but her parents found out about it, and her parents swore out a warrant for this guy for the sale of narcotics, sale of marijuana to their innocent little girl. The kid was arrested, and Bruce was given the job of prosecuting the case. He just didn't have the heart to prosecute the case. He said, "What would I have done if Lou Francis's law had been the law? I'm going to execute this guy?" [Laughter]

After that, Bruce and I became pretty good friends. I think he would be an interesting one to interview. I'm sure he'd give you some good stuff. I know what made me think about Bruce was that I was talking about Freddy Zweback. Freddy, before he got the 210, had a Cessna 150, which is a two-place airplane, and it's very, very slow. I think it has a 140-horsepower Lycoming engine or something like that. He just used it to piddle around locally; he learned to fly in it. But anyhow, Freddy bought the 210 and decided he wanted to sell the 150. He mentioned it to Bruce, and Bruce said he might be interested in buying it. Bruce, I think, had been a navy pilot. I'm not sure, but I believe he was in the navy; he learned to fly there. Anyhow, Freddy said fine, he'd leave the plane over in Santa Monica, [California], and Bruce could pick it up and fly it up to Sacramento. So Bruce picked it up

on a Monday morning, and Bruce didn't show up for the session that day. I ran into him late that afternoon and I said, "Did you bring Freddy's plane up?" He said, "Yes, I did. I could have walked faster." [Laughter] It took him seven hours. A little bit of head wind. You could drive a hell of a lot faster than you could fly that 150 up there.

GIANOS: I remember seeing photographs of those. There was a 140, too. During my days of being enamored of airplanes, I was vaguely aware of that airplane. Another aspect of the relationship with the district that doesn't get talked about, maybe, as much as it should--I was thinking of the literature in my field--is what kinds of relationships you had, if any, as an assemblyman with cities. Did you find yourself dealing with representatives of El Monte or Whittier on that sort of thing?

CAMERON: Yes.

GIANOS: What sort of relationship did you have?

CAMERON: You ended up, really, actually dealing more with the city managers than you did with the elected officials. At least, this is the problem that I had in all my cities--I think there were fourteen cities in the assembly district, as I recall--with the exception of El Monte where they had a Democratic base in the council. But the mayor of El Monte was a guy named Dale Ingram, at that point, and he and I had fought over the assembly seat in the first place, so I didn't



have much of a relationship with him. My relationship with him is pretty good today, but it wasn't back then when I was in the assembly. I had a good relationship, though, with the city manager of El Monte. The other councils, by and large, were Republican. They all opposed me in all the elections, so I didn't have much direct relationship with council members--a few, but not many. But I did have good relationships with all of the city managers. City managers, although they tend to be Republican, they also don't tend to be partisan; they're just administrators. So I did a lot of work directly with them and for them in servicing the cities vis-à-vis the city managers as opposed to vis-à-vis the council.

GIANOS: What sorts of things did you folks do for each other. I presume you helped them and I suppose, in some sense they helped you as well.

CAMERON: Well, I don't think they really helped me.

GIANOS: What did they want from you, basically?

CAMERON: They wanted highway signs; they wanted streetlights; they wanted improvements for all sorts of local projects that were being funded by the state. Mostly, though, it had to do with education and highway type of activities. The state funded all of the school districts, and each one of the school districts always had a pet project of some sort that they wanted to get into the budget and that they wanted to get funded. The cities all had special projects that they wanted

to get funded, or realignment of roads and that type of thing. All infrastructure type things that Reagan subsequently did away with. [Laughter]

GIANOS: Could you tell us a little more about the Motor Vehicles Pollution Control Board legislation?

CAMERON: The first real smog legislation anywhere in the country was the California Motor Vehicle Pollution Control Board that we set up. I was the author of the whole program.

GIANOS: You can't remember the number of the bill, by any chance, do you?

CAMERON: No, I don't. I know the name of it, but I don't remember the number of it. What we did was set up an interim study committee in 1960, I guess it was. Arnold Beckman of the Beckman Instrument Company was a member of the advisory committee. A chap named Dr. [John T.] Middleton was from the University [of California], Riverside, and he was the first one to really get involved with the problem that air pollution was causing as far as vegetation was concerned. He was appointed to chair the committee. I can see him so clearly, a neat guy, Middleton. The person who first clearly identified smog was a guy named [Arie J.] Haagen-Smit at Cal Tech [California Institute of Technology], and he did the research that proved that the photosynthesis that happens from the sunlight hitting hydrocarbons and caused the smog to be actually created through that photosynthesis. Haagen-Smit was on my committee, the interim study committee that we had.

GIANOS: Then the committee was set up by the assembly?

CAMERON: The assembly funded it, and I was the chair of the organization through my legislation. Then I appointed these people to write a report and make recommendations to the legislature on what should be done. We took on the automobile as the first thing, at that point. The county of Los Angeles, as a result of what we were doing, set up an air pollution control district [APCD], which was voted in 1958, I guess it was. They didn't know what the hell they were doing; all we knew is that we had a problem.

GIANOS: Was this under the auspices of the Public Health Committee that you were on in the assembly?

CAMERON: Yes. It was the source of the legislation. S. Smith Griswold was the director of the L.A. County APCD. He was also on the advisory committee. We decided that the solution was to really go after the automobile, because that was causing the amount of air pollution. The committee members were unanimous on that. That is, the interim advisory committee. We set up some standards and then set up the commission. After our interim committee report in the 1960 special session. . . . [That] was when we passed the law that created the commission, and they set up the original standards as to what motor vehicles were going to have to do. It was really fascinating. We had a joint committee meeting of the assembly and the senate, and everybody was pooh-poohing the effect of

what automobiles were doing, Ford Motor Company, Chrysler, General Motors, everybody. It's the first time it had been done. But they put on presentations in the assembly chamber explaining how we didn't know what we were talking about, [that] the automobile wasn't causing any of these problems.

GIANOS: This is after the report had come out? This is after your experts had said cars cause smog?

CAMERON: Yes, after our experts had said it was, and it was before we voted on the legislation that created it. So anyhow, I got Dr. Middleton and Dr. Haagen-Smit to refute, on the assembly floor, what Detroit was telling them, and we ended up passing legislation overwhelmingly.

GIANOS: Was that unusual to do that sort of thing on the floor?

CAMERON: It had never been done before.

GIANOS: Any idea of why it was [done] for the first time in living memory?

CAMERON: Because the automobile industry put so much pressure on, and the oil industry put so much pressure on, and every lobbyist [was under pressure]. There were many more lobbyists running around the halls than there were legislators that week.

GIANOS: As a legislator--in your case, a freshman--was it a tough sell with your assembly colleagues to even raise this issue, much less go full tilt against the automobile industry? It strikes me as a gutsy thing to do.

CAMERON: I would say it did. It started off as a really tough sell,

but when I had Haagen-Smit and Arnold Beckman, just the quality of the people that were involved, they did the selling for me, really. I didn't do it.

GIANOS: Was it a fairly close vote?

CAMERON: I don't recall what the vote was, but we won substantially. The press got behind us pretty good. The L.A. Times was even for us, which was unusual. They'd never done anything before. But the Times and the Examiner and the Mirror, all the papers supported the legislation. I think that really helped more than anything else, except for the quality of our experts and the arrogance of Detroit.

GIANOS: I would assume the senate was a harder sell than the assembly.

CAMERON: Well, yes and no. Back in those days, the senate was set up considerably differently than it is now. There was only one senator from Los Angeles County--his name was Richard Richards--and the senate was more like the United States Senate, in terms of representing land rather than representing people. But Richard Richards was a very effective guy. As I recall, we set this legislation up so that each county could opt in or opt out of participation in it. We did that just because the senate was representing land, as opposed to representing people.

GIANOS: What did it mean, what did they opt in or opt out for? In other words, the county could choose to do what, precisely?

CAMERON: Whether or not they would enforce the regulations that were

going to be adopted by this board. We didn't know what the regulations were going to be.

GIANOS: So this is all prior to knowing the content of the regulation?

CAMERON: What's that?

GIANOS: This local option thing was discussed prior to knowing anything about [the regulation]?

CAMERON: Right, because there were no regulations. We just created a board to get the board to create regulations, and then each county could opt in or out if they wanted to enforce them. The original legislation has been amended many, many times in the thirty years since we passed it. There's no local option anymore.

GIANOS: So under the bill, as drafted then, would the rules that the board set up have the force of law?

CAMERON: Yes.

GIANOS: The board would say "blah-blah," and that would be it?

CAMERON: That would be it.

GIANOS: So you gave them the local option?

CAMERON: The local option, and they could get out. The senate, they didn't care. "What the hell? It doesn't affect the San Joaquin Valley. We'll go along." [University of California] Riverside was pretty much an agricultural school, like [University of California] Davis was; it wasn't near as broad based as it is today. Dr. Middleton was recognized worldwide for knowing what damage was being done to the citrus industry and everything else as a result of smog.

GIANOS: Was that an argument that you used, that it was a rural problem and not just an urban problem?

CAMERON: Yes. But the guys in the San Joaquin Valley said, "We grow cotton. It doesn't affect cotton, and we don't have to abide by your regulations. So sure, we'll go along." And the governor supported the program, too. He was in support of doing something.

GIANOS: Is that your most pleasing legislative accomplishment?

CAMERON: Probably. Other than what I did in the health care industry. But the thing is that the health thing is going on forever. It's going to go on in perpetuity, it looks like. But I didn't accomplish nearly as much as I wanted to in that area.

GIANOS: You were mentioning last time the proprietary hospital business that got you in all sorts of . . .

CAMERON: All sorts of trouble. [Laughter]

GIANOS: What other sorts of health-related problems were you pursuing then?

CAMERON: They all had to do with. . . . I had a number of things in health insurance: requiring the insurance industry to pay health claims, which they weren't doing; to eliminate a lot of exclusions that they had in health insurance policies in those days; to give the people the right of refusal; and to get a refund of their policy premium if their policy was not as represented by the selling agent. These shady guys came around and sold you a policy, and then sent you a policy in

the mail ten days later or two weeks later, and it didn't say what they told you. There was lots of special legislation passed by the Finance and Insurance Committee that had to do with health care, as well as in the [Public] Health Committee. But specifically, I don't remember. It was a long time ago.

GIANOS: You were mentioning last time with regard to the proprietary hospital business, Dick Bergholz, and that opens up a question of the press. You alluded already to the press back in the district, and I'm curious what your assessment, or recollections were of the press in Sacramento. Was Kyle Palmer around then?

CAMERON: I don't recognize the name.

GIANOS: He was political editor of the L.A. Times, but I think he had probably retired.

CAMERON: It was Bergholz and Carl Greenberg and a chap on [the] San Jose Mercury.

GIANOS: Lou Cannon?

CAMERON: No. Lou Cannon was around, but there's another chap. I can see these guys, but I can't recall the names.

GIANOS: Was Lyn Nofziger in Sacramento then?

CAMERON: Oh, yes. Lyn represented Copley Press out of San Diego. In fact, when I went to Washington, it was kind of funny. My administrative assistant back there was a guy named Alex Silva, and Alex was considerably more liberal than I. Lyn



Nofziger, of course, is and was as reactionary as could be. But Lyn was fun to talk with, and he was stimulating. So Alex and Lyn and I did lots of things together. We complemented each other in that we represented three different philosophies. Nofziger used my office, really, as his office. I had a very convenient location in the Cannon House Office Building. My office was on the first floor of the Cannon Building. It used to drive people crazy that Lyn would be in there sitting at one of my secretaries' desk using the phone. He'd be probably in there an hour, an hour and a half a day, this reporter for Copley. It was just sort of an incongruent thing. But he was a stimulating guy to chat with, even though you couldn't agree with him.

GIANOS: Were there any unwritten rules by which the press dealt with you in the legislature and vice versa?

CAMERON: I don't know about unwritten rules. They were quite, quite different then than they are today. The press and the legislature had respect for each other. I see the press today as being vindictive, which they were not then. I don't think that. . . . They argue and say that they were permissive or they were covering up or something like that, and I just don't think that's the case. I think that they just felt that legislators had personal lives and were entitled to a little bit of privacy, which is not true at all today, at least from my viewpoint. Today, it seems to me that the reporters look

for negative things rather than for positive things. They go out of their way to hurt people, and that didn't happen back then. They reported on things that happened in the legislature, but not on a personal basis. Like the "moose milk" lunch that I mentioned before, you didn't see anything about that in the press. Today, you can't have a "moose milk" lunch because of the press. I think we have lost a great deal. It goes back to what I was saying before. The guys who were in the legislature, and the gals who were in the legislature in those days, were there at personal sacrifice to do a public service, and the press recognized that. I guess the press is sort of entitled to do what they do today because these people are professionals. They're no longer private citizens; they're professional legislators. So maybe you're entitled to know where all the warts are, I don't know. Back in the old days, you wouldn't know where the warts were, unless the warts affected a specific piece of legislation. Then you would know. But you wouldn't know who was sleeping with whom.

GIANOS: That's an interesting observation, particularly coupled with what you were saying before about the decline of the clubs, how it all seems to be of a piece.

CAMERON: Right.

GIANOS: If I could, I'd like to move into the transition from the assembly to the [United States] House [of Representatives].

Broadly, what were the circumstances that were present when you were thinking of that move?

CAMERON: I wasn't thinking of it at all. I didn't want to do it. The problem was that they wanted to get more Democratic legislators from California into the House, and who could win in that particular area? It just became obvious that Cameron was the only one who could possibly win out of that area. Phil Burton did the legislative redistricting; he really drew the maps. And Unruh and Munnell, Governor Brown and Burton and Dick Hanna and everybody said, "Cameron, you have to run for Congress, because you're the only one who can win there. And I don't care how we draw the district, you've got a shot at it and no other Democrat would have." I said, "I'm not about to run. I like what I'm doing, and I don't want to move to Washington. My kids are happy in school. I've got a little bit of an accounting practice left which I've got to dump."

GIANOS: Why would you have to dump it?

CAMERON: I couldn't practice as a CPA [certified public accountant] in California while I was living in Washington for nine to ten months to two years.

GIANOS: I misunderstood. You would have had to have done that, had you moved to D.C?

CAMERON: I would have had to get out of that, yes. I just couldn't see it. But that's the one area where I got pressured and finally

decided, what the hell, go ahead and do it. But on one condition, and that is that you've got a five-year vesting on pension benefits in the legislature, and I'm only going to have been here four years, so you're going to have to change that law or I'm not going to run. I haven't paid any social security and I'm not going to have any retirement benefits. So they changed the law. They dropped it from five years to four years.

GIANOS: Was anybody else in that boat except you?

CAMERON: No.

GIANOS: So basically, you went to Unruh.

CAMERON: No. Unruh came to me and said, "We need you to run," and I said, "No, I'm not going to run." Then, after discussing it back and forth, I said, "This is a condition precedent to my running," and so that bill got. . . . I don't know what the hell we tacked that on. We tacked it on to something, and it just went through.

GIANOS: Did you have any say or role in discussions about what that district would look like?

CAMERON: Oh, yes, I did. I had to, because in order to get enough Democrats in it. . . . It's a rather peculiar looking district. It's not as bad as some of them are today. The bulk of the district was in El Monte, Baldwin Park, Azusa, Covina, La Puente, West Covina, running across the 210 [Foothill] and the 10 [San Bernardino] freeways. Then it

tapered down and came over the hill, and my house was clear down at the very bottom.

GIANOS: [Laughter]

CAMERON: It looked like an arrow pointing to my house.

GIANOS: Those lines were drawn by Phil Burton in that configuration?

CAMERON: Right.

GIANOS: Who was involved? You sat down, he sat down, what was the process behind the drafting?

CAMERON: I didn't really sit down. I didn't get involved at all. I told them, "In order to win, I'm going to have to have about a 58 percent Democratic district"--so he gave me 58 percent Democrats--"and as many of them as you can that are in the existing Fiftieth and. . . ." What was the other one? The Fifty-eighth Assembly District, I think, was the other assembly district that was there. Harvey Johnson was the assemblyman. No, Harvey wasn't either. We elected Harvey when I went to Congress. I don't know. It was another assembly district there. I don't know which it was, but it was one that I had a lot of influence over and I knew a lot of the people. "Get me 58 percent Democrats and as many of them out of these two assembly districts as you can, and make a congressional district out of it and put my house in it, and I'll run." So that's what Phil did. He had census sheets all over the place, and maps, just incredible. His office was unreal during that session. Bobby Crown, who I mentioned earlier, was very much deeply involved in that with Phil.

GIANOS: Were there any negotiations involved with other house members that would be adjacent to the new Twenty-fifth [Congressional District], so that if the Twenty-fifth were to be drawn a certain way, then, "Look, if you want the Twenty-fifth this direction, you're going to cut into my district, and I don't want you to do that," and that sort of business?

CAMERON: If there was--I'm sure there was--I wasn't involved in it. I had told Jesse and Phil Burton and Carmen [H.] Warschaw and [Phillip D.] Wyman, "Yes, I will run if you give me this district, but that has this in it." I let them worry about it; I had other fish to fry.

GIANOS: Tell us a little bit about that race, if you would, the first race in '62.

CAMERON: The primary was difficult, because George [A.] Kasem had been the congressman there. George had been defeated in 1960 by John [H.] Rousselot. That was another reason that I ran, really, because I did not want Rousselot. Rousselot was very active in the John Birch Society, and that was terribly distressing to me. Kasem decided that he was going to run once we had drawn the district. He could see that a Democrat could beat Rousselot. He decided that he was going to run, and I said, "Don't do it, George. You're a nice guy, but you can't win. Rousselot chewed you up last time, he'll chew you up again." George didn't see it my way or the way that party leadership saw it at that point, if you could call it

leadership. So we had a difficult primary, because George and I had a lot of mutual friends, and they were forced into a position of supporting one or the other. They couldn't support us both. So that primary was a difficult primary, and I lost a lot of friends in that primary, most of whom came back while I was still in Congress [but] some of which never came back. But a lot of relationships are not nearly as strong as they were previously.

GIANOS: Because they were forced to choose?

CAMERON: Yes. Of course, I had been very instrumental in electing George to Congress in the first place, because at that point, when he was first elected, I was the organization chairman for the whole damned area. George would not have been my first choice, but he was somebody that I knew and I liked. We're good friends today. He's retired now. We're not close, but we have no animosity, one towards the other. Time heals all wounds.

GIANOS: What was the nature of the campaign--the debate, the disagreements in that primary?

CAMERON: Who could win and who couldn't win, basically. There wasn't much philosophically different between us. George was an Arab, and at that time he had, I think, an anti-Jewish bias. I think he's outgrown that in the meantime. He would never admit to being anti-Semitic, but things that I had heard him say in private were definitely anti-Semitic. Although that

was not an issue in the campaign in any sense, there were an awful lot of Jewish people who felt that way about George. I told you, during the convention in 1960, he threw the badge at Governor Brown. He had alienated a lot of the leadership of the Democratic party, and, as a result, he wasn't able to raise nearly as much money in the primary as I was. I had the support of the California Democratic Council. He did not have that support, which he had had in the previous campaign. Then the club movement was pretty strong in '62.

GIANOS: So was Dollars for Democrats still part of your campaign war chest?

CAMERON: Sure.

GIANOS: Do you recall the vote in the primary, roughly?

CAMERON: No, I don't.<sup>1</sup>

GIANOS: So the fund raising thing very much was to your advantage?

CAMERON: Yes, both within the district and without the district, because at that point in time, as I mentioned, Fred Schwarz from the Christian Anti-Communist Crusade and the John Birch Society had so alienated and [was] so feared, as far as the Jewish community was concerned, that there was a lot of money available from them. It didn't take all that much money, didn't take anything like the kind of money it takes today to

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1. The results of the 1962 primary election were: Cameron, 22,704; Kasem, 11,753; three others, 10,490. State of California Statement of Vote (June 5, 1962): 19.



run a campaign. You couldn't use television. For god's sake, when you were one of fifteen or seventeen congressional districts that were covered by the television channels, you couldn't afford to buy television time for a congressional race. All you could do was mailings, and we did mailings a lot differently in those days. We hand addressed. We didn't do it the way they do today. The one thing I did in the general election, I pulled a real coup. I got the president to write me a letter. I don't remember exactly what the letter said. It was very short, but it was put on the president's note paper. [Lawrence F.] Larry O'Brien was President Kennedy's political operative, and he and I were pretty good buddies, so Larry got the president to write me this letter. I got the letter the fifteenth of October or something like that. I'm trying to think how I could best get this to help in the campaign. So what I did is I just reproduced the letter completely and reproduced White House envelopes completely. Then I handwrote a little note and reproduced that and stuck it all together and said, "Look, this is a copy of a letter that the president sent me about how much he needs me in Washington, and I thought you might be interested."

GIANOS: That quote was handwritten by you: "This is a copy of . . ."

CAMERON: Right. Put it all together. I don't remember how many there were in that mailing, probably 60,000 pieces in that mailing.

All of the envelopes were hand addressed, "Mr. and Mrs. Jones" or "Mr. and Mrs. Smith," whoever it was. We stamped them. We flew them to Washington, D.C., and mailed them from the Washington post office. Return address: The White House.

GIANOS: [Laughter] Oh, my God.

CAMERON: That was an effective mailing.

GIANOS: No kidding. It must have been. You wrote to 60,000 people?

CAMERON: No. The envelopes were all hand addressed. But no, my little note inside was handwritten by me.

GIANOS: And then reproduced. OK. Sixty thousand, it's a pretty daunting thought.

CAMERON: Yes.

GIANOS: What was it like running against Rousselot?

CAMERON: There was a guy named Joe Flynn, who had a television program that came on at eleven-thirty at night, an hour and a half program. Rousselot and I had not had a face-to-face confrontation before we had one with Joe Flynn. He invited us on his program. It went for about, I don't know, fifty minutes or something like that, and Rousselot had been talking all the time. I'd been sitting there openmouthed, and they broke for another commercial. Flynn said to me, "Ron, are you ever going to take this guy on? I said, "What do you mean?" He said, "He's been talking pretty much exclusively for fifty minutes." I said, "Isn't it incredible, the things he's saying?" He said, "Yes, I think it's incredible, but I'm not

sure the audience does." So for the last twenty minutes of the program, I was in there with both feet. From then on, I took him on at every opportunity and didn't let him dominate the way he does. He's moderated tremendously since then, but he was just unbelievable. Unbelievable.

GIANOS: How often did you two actually meet face-to-face?

CAMERON: We probably had twelve, fifteen debates during the course of the campaign.

GIANOS: What appeared to you, at least, to be his main issues against you? What was he hitting you with?

CAMERON: I was soft on communism. I was a "pinko." Everybody was a "pinko."

GIANOS: This is my recollection of Rousselot as well. Were there specific votes of yours that he was citing?

CAMERON: No. He really didn't have any. I don't know, there were probably some assembly votes that he had. But I have always been a person who's been very outspoken about what my belief is in anything. I was opposed to the death penalty; that was a big issue. I was soft on narcotics because I didn't vote for capital punishment for marijuana. I was clearly soft on communism because I had written a newsletter that said that "Lou Francis has introduced a congratulatory resolution on behalf of a guy named [ ] Lechner." The vote on the resolution was, I think. . . . There's eighty members of the assembly, and I think the vote was 78 to 2. That is, 78

against the congratulatory resolution and the 2 were for it. I wrote newsletters all the time to my district, and so I wrote a newsletter on this one. I included this vote in my newsletter, and I said that the reason that the vote was 78 to 2 was that "the person being congratulated was a professional anti-Semite who had profiteered at the expense of the Nisei during the Second World War." I thought that that was an accurate statement. [Laughter] The reason I remember that so specifically--I don't remember the exact language that I had in the newsletter--is that when we were leaving for Washington after the election, after Christmas, I'd packed up a trailer and was taking a station wagon hauling the trailer back to Washington with whatever personal effects we had to have. It was all hooked up in the driveway. This would have been the morning of December 27 when we were leaving for Washington. My son, who was seven years old, I guess, probably, six years old, came in and woke me up at four-thirty, five o'clock in the morning. I said, "What in the world are you doing in here?" He said, "There's somebody here to see you." I looked at the clock. "At four-thirty in the morning?" "Yes." "Well, who is it?" "I don't know. There's some man in the living room to see you." I jump up out of bed. "My God, it must be a process server. Who else could it be at this time of the morning?" I go out there, and, sure enough, it was a process server. I was being sued for \$1 million and all sorts

CAMERON: of other things for having slandered this person whom I had called a professional anti-Semite. So we didn't leave for Washington that day. [Joseph] Joe Ball, a past president of the California Bar Association, was a buddy of mine. He's a very well-known attorney in Long Beach, [California]. So I waited until nine o'clock and called Joe. I told him my problems. He laughed. He thought that was just hysterical. Of course, I'm panicked. I wasn't an attorney at that point; I was just a CPA. I didn't know anything about law, about being sued. Joe said, "Come down to the office," and he would take care of it for me. Joe knew the guy [Lechner] and he agreed with me that that's exactly what he was. [Laughter]

[End Tape 2, Side B]

[Session 3, April 24, 1990]

[Begin Tape 3, Side A]

GIANOS: Mr. Cameron, when we left off last time, you had just been served with a \$1 million lawsuit, as I recall, from Mr. Lechner. Could you continue that story, please?

CAMERON: Yes. His name was Lechner. I can't think of his first name at the minute. I had called him a professional anti-Semite who had profiteered at the expense of the Niseis during the Second World War. It had been in a newsletter of mine that had gone out several months previously. We were on our way to Washington, D.C., when we got served at four o'clock or five o'clock in the morning. As a result, I called Joseph Ball, who was the immediate past president of the California Bar [Association]--he's an attorney in Long Beach--and made an appointment with him. He laughed. He thought it was really funny then. He was well aware of Lechner. Lechner had lived in Long Beach and had managed to make himself pretty unpleasant to an awful lot of people in that community, of which Joe Ball was one of the outstanding citizens. So he thought the lawsuit was funny, and I was panicked. I went down to his office that morning instead of leaving for

Washington and met with Joe for about an hour.' [He] brought in a couple of his protégés, and we managed to put together an answer to the complaint. I signed a verification, and we left for Washington at three o'clock in the afternoon instead of eight [o'clock] in the morning as we had planned.

Incidentally, on that lawsuit, nothing ever came of it. Some five years later, we moved for dismissal of the suit for lack of prosecution. Of course, the court dismissed the lawsuit.

GIANOS: So they did nothing.

CAMERON: No, they did nothing. What could he do? I had a perfect defense: it was true. [Laughter] What he did in the way of profiteering is, he would buy foreclosed houses that the Niseis were moved out of. Nobody's making payments on it. He would make a deal with the lenders and buy the houses. He was like another guy that always got my goat, Fred Schwarz, who had the Christian Anti-Communist Crusade. He was a Fred Schwarz type of individual.

GIANOS: There's one question I'd like to pursue, to back up to the campaign against Rousselot. You said Rousselot was coming at you as a "pinko," soft on communism, and so on. What were your issues, and what was your strategy against him?

CAMERON: The converse of that, that he was a member of the John Birch Society, and he was. He was definitely an ultraextremist right-winger, and he had a hard time making me really a communist. But the one thing that I had refused to do. . . .

When I was first sworn into the assembly, they had a loyalty oath that you were supposed to take at that point, and I had campaigned against it and refused to take the loyalty oath. So the rules of the assembly got changed because four or five of us refused to swear that we had never been Communists. That, of course, haunted me for a long time, but it just seemed to me that that was totally inappropriate to impugn my integrity with no basis for it, and I'm not going to swear to not be something that I'd never been.

GIANOS: Do you recall who else refused to take that oath?

CAMERON: Oh, no, I don't remember at this time. There were several of us. It became a heated issue. I don't recall.

GIANOS: So Rousselot used that action against you in the campaign?

CAMERON: He tried to. But I had been very open and forthright about it. As I say, I think Rousselot defeated himself rather than my having defeated him in that, because of his right-wing activity, it made it much easier for me to finance my campaign than it normally would have been, because there were people that were really afraid of the John Birch Society at that particular time. So that helped me considerably in financing. Of course, I had represented the [assembly] district for four years and was pretty well known. Or substantially [represented] that [congressional] district. It was awfully hard to convince people that I was something that I hadn't been in the previous four years serving in the assembly.



GIANOS: Were there any issues beyond the kind of John Birch Society sorts of things that were dominant in that campaign, or was that largely the main issue?

CAMERON: You're reaching back thirty years ago. It's hard to remember what. . . . I was looking through a scrapbook the other night, just glancing through it. I thought at the time--thirty years ago--I was a very sophisticated politician. I looked at the pictures, and I look at the articles now, and realize I wasn't nearly as sophisticated as I thought I was. I also was surprised in looking through it. You were correct when you said that [Travis] Tag Manning, I only beat him by a couple of thousand votes. I had so much disrespect for Tag I just naturally thought I beat him overwhelmingly, but I didn't.

GIANOS: It's an interesting comment you made. When you said you were less sophisticated than you thought, what did you see in the scrapbook that led you to conclude that you were not all that sophisticated?

CAMERON: Just the phraseology, the press releases, the wording of all sorts of things, the photographs. Of course, the photographs were dated because of the time. I don't recognize myself. I'm so youthful that I'm amazed anybody would vote for me. But it's not something you can put your finger on specifically. It's just that the times have changed so much.

GIANOS: Yes, thirty years ago. Well, enough people voted for you to send you to Congress.

CAMERON: Yes.

GIANOS: If we can finally get you into Congress, let me just ask a general question. What were your initial impressions? What were your first days in Washington and getting used to the House [of Representatives] like? What sorts of things were you doing then as the new kid on the block?

CAMERON: I was the new kid on the block, all right. I had no idea how the real power structure in the House worked. I wanted to be on the Foreign Affairs Committee, and everyone else wanted to be on the Foreign Affairs Committee. There were eight freshman congressmen from California when I went there, and six of them wanted the House Foreign Affairs Committee. Had I known then what I knew two or three or four years later, that would not have been my choice of a committee, because you really don't have that much impact on foreign affairs and you have practically no impact on any other legislative activity. The reason being, foreign affairs at that time was an exclusive committee, and if you were on that one, it was the only committee you could be on. You can't do a hell of a lot for your constituency on the Foreign Affairs Committee. It was fascinating [and] interesting, but not something that made it possible to relate to specific legislative programs that were meaningful.

GIANOS: What, specifically, was so attractive about that committee for you and a lot of the other freshmen?

CAMERON: Just the times, I guess. There was so much activity going on in terms of what was happening in Russia, what was happening in Europe, what was happening in Southeast Asia. The world was in a state of turmoil, and you sort of wanted to get your hand into it and see if you couldn't help straighten it out. I can assure you that you can't straighten it out, that the State Department, down there in "Foggy Bottom," does whatever they damned well want to do. They told you what they wanted you to know, and it hasn't changed to this day. The Constitution says the president will conduct the foreign affairs of the United States, and they believe it implicitly. The Contra thing, with [Admiral John] Poindexter and [Oliver L.] Ollie North, is just a great example of the fact that things haven't changed one bit in thirty years. The Executive Branch will do what it wants to do in the way of foreign affairs, period.

GIANOS: Did you find that the case even though you were a Democrat [and] that the administration was in the hands of your own party?

CAMERON: Absolutely. When it came to matters of foreign affairs, there was absolutely no compunction on the part of anybody in the State Department to lie to the Congress. I was in Vietnam. I returned from Vietnam the day that President [Ngo Dinh] Diem was murdered, and his brother [Ngo Dinh Nhu]. Riots were going on. There was a coup going on. It's when Nguyen Cao Ky

came in as vice president. There were news reports coming across. I was speaking at the Rotary Club in Whittier that day, and I had just returned from Vietnam the previous day. I called the assistant secretary of state for Southeast Asia that morning before I went to give a speech at the Rotary Club and got a current, up-to-date briefing of exactly what was going on. He had just gotten the information; he'd just gotten off the phone from talking to Ambassador [Henry] Cabot Lodge, who was our ambassador there at that time. He gives me all this information. I went out and made a speech based upon the information. Twenty-eight hours later, I knew everything they had told me was flat-out lies.

GIANOS: What sorts of information?

CAMERON: Oh, that the United States wasn't involved in it and that Diem had sanctuary. I don't remember the specifics. But he was already dead when they were telling me that he had sanctuary in the embassy. You know, just nonsense.

GIANOS: Was that the beginning of your loss of innocence in all of this?

CAMERON: No. I was suspicious before that. [Laughter] That was the culmination of it, not the beginning. From then on, I was extremely distrustful of whatever I could get from the State Department.

GIANOS: Just to get this in the record, you said that everybody wanted [to be on the] Foreign Affairs [Committee], but a lot of

people didn't get it. How did you come to get it? What procedures did you go through to get on that committee?

CAMERON: Careful lobbying. The way committees were selected is that they were obviously appointed by the speaker, but each [state] delegation had a member who made recommendations to the speaker. Based upon the number of members from California, it was obvious that California was entitled to a seat on the Foreign Affairs Committee, so it was a question of lobbying. Cecil King was then our representative who coordinated with the speaker on making recommendations for where the freshmen members would serve. Of course, I had Gene Wyman, who was the state chairman of the party at that point, and Jesse Unruh, who was speaker [of the California State Assembly] at that point, obviously lobbying Cecil for me, also. So I had the "powers that be" on my team at that point, and I got what I wanted--which turned out to be not what I wanted. But that seems to be generally the case: when you want something badly, it never tastes quite the same once you get it.

GIANOS: Even though you had competition, was it reasonably easy for you, through this lobbying, to get that committee slot?

CAMERON: I don't know that it was easy. I think a couple of the guys got smarter than I did faster than I did and probably dropped out of the competition before the appointments were actually made. I know at the time that we went back there, six of the eight wanted it. But I think a couple of them decided that

Banking and Currency, and Education, and things like that made more sense as far as their district was concerned, so they went that way.

GIANOS: Did anyone urge you not to go for Foreign Affairs?

CAMERON: No. But I was very naive. I didn't even want to run for Congress at the time. I think I mentioned before, I was put in a position that somebody had to get rid of Rousselot; and if we were going to have a chance to do it, I was going to be the only one that could possibly do it. So I was very naive about the whole thing.

GIANOS: To get back to the relationship with the State Department and the administration, what sorts of people in the State Department were you dealing with by virtue of being on the committee?

CAMERON: Assistant secretaries, primarily, and the secretary. The secretary was much more honest with us than the assistant secretaries were. It was interesting. Dean Rusk was pretty forthright. He was very careful in couching his information. But Dean wouldn't lie to you. This doesn't say all his subordinates wouldn't. But he wouldn't lie to you.

GIANOS: Was there anyone at the assistant secretary level that you came especially to trust or to distrust, as the case may be, over your experience?

CAMERON: I can't remember the names right now. It's too long ago. There was one chap who, when he walked into the room, I wanted

to walk out. There was another one who was assistant secretary for Latin America [Richard Goodwin] who was extremely forthright and good, and I really had confidence in him. But I can't recall their names at this point. I can see faces, but I can't attach names to each of them.

GIANOS: How about people in the White House? What sorts of contact did you have with people in the White House?

CAMERON: I had good relations with the White House. Larry O'Brien was the president's congressional liaison man, and a guy named [Charles] Chuck Daley was one of his assistants. Daley later became president of the University of Chicago. I had excellent relations with both of them.

GIANOS: On what sorts of matters? The general thrust of foreign policy?

CAMERON: Anything that I wanted White House help on.

GIANOS: What sorts of things would you seek White House help on, as a general rule?

CAMERON: Specific constituent problems, periodically: things with regard to expediting educational funds in the district and helping with federal grants for various cities in the district. My gosh, being a "bagman" for the district, I guess.

GIANOS: With regard to the constituency service stuff, were there any differences that you found between your experience in the House and your experience in the assembly?

CAMERON: Yes. In the assembly, I always felt that I knew what was

going on, and was in more intimate contact than I was with the various federal departments. The bureaucracy is just so huge in Washington that it's very, very difficult. I couldn't go directly to an agency head. I'd have to get Daley or O'Brien to get me involved with the right person at the right agency in order to get their attention. That wasn't true [in California]. I didn't have to get Governor Brown to give me entrée or Cecil Poole to get me entrée or Fred Dutton or whoever was in the governor's office to get me entrée to the agency heads in Sacramento. I just automatically had it. So that was a lot different. The federal government is a very large bureaucracy is all you can say, and cutting through it can be extremely difficult and frustrating. I'm sure it's worse today than it was then.

GIANOS: Yes. Speaking of size, the California congressional delegation . . .

CAMERON: At the time I was there, I think it was thirty-two members, or thirty-four.<sup>1</sup> It's now forty-five and going up to, probably, fifty after the next census, I understand, something like that.

GIANOS: Did you find that you dealt with the delegation as a unit?

CAMERON: No.

GIANOS: In other words, was there much organization or structure to the delegation?

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1. There were thirty-eight members of the delegation in 1964. California Roster 1964.



CAMERON: No. You dealt with the delegation as a caucus: a Democratic caucus and a Republican caucus. We had a Democratic luncheon in the speaker's dining room, which is a small room that seats maybe thirty people at one big table. It's right off of the House members dining room. It was a special room that's reserved for the speaker, and if you want to use it, you have to get the speaker's permission. We had it for luncheon every Wednesday. The Democratic delegation would meet in there and discuss whatever we were discussing on Wednesdays.

GIANOS: When you say the Democratic delegation, you mean . . .

CAMERON: The Democratic members from California would meet there, so there would be eighteen, twenty of us there. You might bring in some other people who wanted to speak to us. As far as full delegation meetings of both the Democrats and Republicans, I don't think they occurred more than--I'm speaking now of the Californians--three or four times a session of Congress. It would have to be something pretty earth shattering that could get all of us together.

GIANOS: So the meetings weren't regularly scheduled?

CAMERON: No.

GIANOS: Do you recall what issues would lead to a meeting like that?

CAMERON: California Water Plan or something that was of monumental interest to all persons in California. I recall we had a meeting on air pollution at one time. I know we had a couple on the water plan. We had one on oil drilling. But it had to

be something that was of universal, nonpartisan type interest in order to get the whole delegation together.

GIANOS: Who would call those meetings? Who would preside? How were they organized?

CAMERON: The chairman of the Republican caucus and the chairman of the Democratic caucus would get together. As a practical matter, our chairman was Harry [R.] Sheppard, and this was strictly because of seniority. Harry was from San Bernardino [County], and was really quite feeble and not with it. [In previous years, he had been a wonderful congressman, but his body had worn out by the time of the Eighty-eighth Congress. But he was still alive, and the senior member of the delegation.]\* So as a practical matter, Cecil King or Chet Holifield were really running the show. Harry was presiding. Cecil or Chet would say, "Hey, we ought to get together and have a meeting." At that point, I believe [Robert C.] Bob Wilson of San Diego was the chairman of the California Republican caucus, so they would get together with Bob and say, "You know, shouldn't we have a meeting on this particular subject, and we'll get So-and-so to come and give the state's position on it and see if we can solidify and use our muscle on a state basis instead of on a partisan basis?"

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\* Mr. Cameron added the preceding bracketed material during his review of the draft transcript.

GIANOS: So the initiation would be, basically, if I understand it, if [it were] a statewide issue, you might have a state official come and speak, and the point of the meeting was what? To get a bipartisan position?

CAMERON: Yes, a bipartisan position from the state of California in support of whatever legislation was then pending that would be crucial to the state of California.

GIANOS: Is it your recollection that that was hard to do or easy to do?

CAMERON: Hard to do. There weren't that many issues that were. . . . As I said, I think three or four times a year is all it happened. Of course, there were other issues where we were pretty united, and we didn't need to have a meeting. Everybody was kind of going along the same way, anyway, so you would just lobby your own friends and not worry about doing it on a bipartisan basis.

GIANOS: So a meeting would denote some controversy.

CAMERON: Right.

GIANOS: So the delegation, if it were to move in concert, would not require a meeting?

CAMERON: That's right.

GIANOS: What sorts of issues do you recall that were of a consensual sort?

CAMERON: I really don't recall. There were just so damned many votes back there.

GIANOS: But the movement of the delegation would be kind of automatic, almost. Is that right?

CAMERON: Yes. There was good rapport between the Republicans and the Democrats. There was a camaraderie, by and large, throughout the House. There was very little acrimony between members, even members who were on the extremes, because there were going to be issues where you're alike. Even though you may be opposed to each other on 90 percent of them, there's that 10 percent, and you always hope you're going to get the vote on the other one. There's a good example. I don't know whether I mentioned this before, but there was a congressman named James [B.] Utt from Orange County, who was an ultra, ultra, ultraconservative. I was not an ultraliberal, but certainly a liberal. You'd frequently find a House vote of 422 to 5, and everybody would know that James Utt and Ronald Cameron were part of the 5. Jimmy and I had a good relationship. Just because everybody is for something didn't mean that we were for it.

GIANOS: What sorts of issues would result in your and Utt's being among the five, in your general recollection?

CAMERON: I'd have to go back and look at my record on that. One that I don't think was that bad, but it was a vote on eliminating the funding for the House Committee on Un-American Activities, and Jimmy and I both voted for that.

GIANOS: But for different reasons, I assume.

CAMERON: Different reasons. But the committee should never have existed from the day of Martin Dies, but that it was still in

existence in the 1960s was just appalling to me. I don't remember what Jimmy's reasons were, but I know we both voted on that. There were several others. They were absurd issues, by and large, that should never have been voted on in the first place. But they had great popular appeal, and why vote against something that everybody likes? You do it because it's stupid.

GIANOS: So it sounds like you were both sort of contrarians, in a sort of a stock market sense.

CAMERON: No. I think we were honest. I think it's different. It's not [being] a contrarian. Well, as I told you before, I published my record of every vote, whether I made it or not. I told everybody in the district how I would have voted had I voted.

GIANOS: To pursue the delegation a little bit more, are there any folks you recall, either on your side of the aisle or the other side of the aisle, who are particularly memorable one way or the other, positively or negatively?

CAMERON: In the California delegation?

GIANOS: Yes. People with whom you worked or about whom you knew.

CAMERON: Our delegation wasn't in much of a leadership capacity. Chet Holifield was the chairman of the Committee on Nuclear Energy, I think it was called at that point, and he was pretty influential. [Bernard F.] Bernie Sisk was on the Agriculture Committee. He was from the San Joaquin Valley. He was pretty

influential in agricultural matters. I disagreed with him on a lot of things--the sugar quotas, for one thing, and the tobacco quotas, for another thing--that he supported like mad. He was just trading off votes for things that were beneficial to the San Joaquin Valley, but he did have a good impact on agriculture, as far as California is concerned. John [E.] Moss from Sacramento was sort of a gadfly, a hell of a speaker, and had his finger in every pie that was going on in the House and was a pretty influential guy, I think. A chap who subsequently became minority whip was John J. McFall. He was not a strong person, and I think Carl Albert, the then majority leader, selected him because he wasn't a strong person, so Carl could run the show and didn't have to worry too much about John giving him a hard time.

GIANOS: You mentioned last time, as I recall, with the tape recorder off, that you'd had a little run-in with Carl Albert?

CAMERON: Oh, yes.

GIANOS: Could you put that on the record?

CAMERON: There was a system in the House where, if you weren't going to be there on a roll call vote and you specifically wanted your vote recorded even though you weren't there--it could not be recorded for purposes of passing or defeating a piece of legislation--you could call the parliamentarian's office and/or the whip's office and tell them how you would like to be recorded on the vote. What they would do is pair you on

that. You wanted to be recorded "Yea," somebody else wanted to be recorded "Nay," they would pair the two of you, one against the other, so that you would be on record. I was going to be out of town on this specific vote. I don't remember what the vote was, even, but it was something that I considered to be crucial at the time, and I had a very fixed opinion about this particular thing and I was against it. The leadership, the speaker, and Carl, all the rest of them were for it, so they specifically paired me the wrong way. It was done deliberately, not to hurt me, but because the Republican on the other side wanted to be on record, and in order to be on record, he had to be paired against some Democrat, and they didn't have a Democrat who had that position, because they had run out of people. So they specifically paired me in an inappropriate manner, and Carl and I had some real hard feelings over that. I don't think he ever got over it. He never forgot the way I felt about him and the things I said to him face-to-face. Of course, Carl was a banty rooster. He's a quite bright guy. He was a Rhodes scholar, a graduate of the University of Oklahoma, and about four foot eight [inches].

GIANOS: Really?

CAMERON: I mean, he was cocky. He was a typical, cocky little guy. Maybe four foot ten, but he was under five feet.

GIANOS: Could you characterize the conversation, if I can call it that?

CAMERON: No, I wouldn't care to do that. It was acrimonious. I'll use that as the characteristic.

GIANOS: That's understood. When you said that he never forgot that, did that reverberate in any way on how he treated you subsequently to that?

CAMERON: I felt that it did. I had a good relationship with everybody else in the House, but I didn't have any relationship with Carl.

GIANOS: Any specific things you can recall or care to recall?

CAMERON: No. Just that when there were six people in the room, and one of them happened to be Carl and one of them happened to be Ron, Carl didn't know that there were more than five people in the room.

GIANOS: [Laughter] I'd like to talk about another aspect of the delegation that you mentioned before, which is the Democratic part, the Democratic caucus in the California House delegation. You said you met weekly on Wednesdays. What was the structure? Who presided? Did you have a formal agenda, for instance?

CAMERON: Everybody would make a report on whatever their committee activity was, if there was anything worthwhile to report that was going on in your particular committee. As I said, Harry Sheppard presided, but Harry was asleep most of the time. So as a result, it was the senior member who was there, and Chet Holifield was next senior to Harry. It's odd. If I were still there, I would now be the chairman. No, I wouldn't. Yes. I'd be the chairman of the delegation. I would have



been, I think, four years ago, because there were eight of us who came in all at the same time, of which three are still there. But Cameron is the name that is the highest in the alphabet amongst the ones who are still there, so I would be the chairman of the California delegation if I were still a member of Congress. Isn't that ridiculous?

GIANOS: Was the turnout pretty good? Would you get most members in the weekly meetings?

CAMERON: Yes, those that were in town. People are always traveling. But I would say we had an 80 percent turnout for every meeting.

GIANOS: Is it fair to infer from that, that people thought that it was a pretty important meeting to go to there?

CAMERON: Yes, if they wanted to get their points across. Each of us had a different circle of friends within the House, because you tended to have a specific camaraderie with your committee members. The committees might run anywhere from twelve to forty members, and there would only be one or two from California amongst a forty-member committee. So if I wanted to influence somebody on something in Foreign Affairs, I'd try to sell it to all the California delegation so they, in turn, would try to sell it to their committees, whatever committee they sat on, whoever they had camaraderie [with].

GIANOS: So you traded information. You lobbied, essentially, for your own legislation.

CAMERON: Oh, absolutely. Not necessarily your own legislation, [but]

legislation in which you had an interest. You might not be an author.

GIANOS: It sounds as though, the way you're describing this, this is more a meeting of Democrats who just happen to come from California as opposed to California Democrats who are talking about California related legislation. Is that fair?

CAMERON: Yes, that's fair.

GIANOS: So it almost was a meeting of convenience, in terms of that you're all from the same state.

CAMERON: Right.

GIANOS: So does it also follow from that, that California issues didn't come up with any great frequency?

CAMERON: To the extent that there were issues that were primarily California, they came up. An example: [Harold T.] Bizz Johnson. Bizz had been a California state senator before he went to Washington. I don't remember what his real name was. Everybody called him Bizz. He was a ranking member. He wasn't senior. He ultimately became chairman of the Public Works Committee, but he was a ranking member of Public Works at that point. He had learned his lessons well in Sacramento when he was in the California State Senate. I don't know how long Bizz was there, eight years or twelve years before he went to the House. He was there during the period when state Senator Randolph Collier was the chairman of the Public Works Committee in California, and they built the California freeway

system. The amount of lobbying that went on county by county by county to get the right-of-ways and to solve all the problems in the freeways was just incredible.

As I said, Bizz learned at Randy Collier's knee, and he took that knowledge back to Washington. He was tremendously influential in helping to finish the freeway system here, the California aqueduct system, the Oroville Dam--all the water projects in California, Bizz was vitally involved in. Of course, there were disagreements as to north and south, so Bizz would be working his little tail off, only his little tail was pretty big, about six foot four and weight about 280 pounds. But he would be lobbying all the time to move his public works legislation and to get votes from the East and other areas. Everybody went along with Carl Albert's canal to make Tulsa, [Oklahoma], a port city. But in turn, Carl turned around and did all these things for California.

GIANOS: The north-south distinction is interesting, because everybody hears about north-south. People also talk about east-west, the San Joaquin Valley compared with everything else. Any recollections from your days in the House that those alleged regional differences really did make a difference in terms of how the delegation functioned?

CAMERON: Oh, yes. John Moss, if it didn't affect Sacramento, he wasn't interested in it. He wouldn't come to the meeting. If Sacramento wasn't involved, he wasn't interested.

GIANOS: Was that typical of most of your colleagues? `

CAMERON: No. John was the exception to that. There were a lot more north-south problems in the California legislature than there were in the House of Representatives, although the things that were important in Sacramento were important in Washington, but just to a lesser degree. But there was still that sort of thing. Of course, I think we made some terrible mistakes in California politics, and one of them is one man, one vote. I think we had a better legislature in California under the old system prior to the one man, one vote when we apportioned the state senate based upon land and we apportioned the assembly based upon people. I think we had a better balance. I don't think we had near as much divisiveness as we have today, as far as I can see. California might as well have a unicameral legislature, like Nebraska. It doesn't serve any purpose to have two houses anymore.

GIANOS: What, specifically, do you find good about the pre one person, one vote, in terms of how the legislature might function?

CAMERON: I think there was more considered legislation for the state of California, as opposed to the regionalism that we have today. The area south of the Tehachapi Mountains is the one who can do whatever it wants to in California today. As a result, that just puts more power in the hands of the governor and less power in the hands of the legislature. I think it was a better balance when California was balanced the same way the

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United States is. Nevada's got one congressman and two United States senators. I think that's a fine system.

GIANOS: I've heard people say that before, for whatever that is worth.

CAMERON: [Laughter]

GIANOS: No? For whatever that information is worth. When you entered the House, was there . . .

CAMERON: Would you change the United States Congress? Would you, Phil? Would you apportion it . . .

GIANOS: No, I would not, although I've got kind of a philosophical thing with the one person, one vote.

CAMERON: I do, too, in local elections, but not in a bicameral situation.

GIANOS: When you entered the House, was there a person or were there persons who served as your mentors, who took you under their wing and said, "Look, this is how it's done. This is how you should operate. These are the people you ought to know"?

CAMERON: Probably Cecil King, [who] was the third senior member of the California delegation--he was from San Pedro--would fall into that category. Dr. [Thomas E.] Morgan, who was from Pittsburgh, [Pennsylvania], was the chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee. He was extremely helpful and influential in showing me the ropes, at least showing me where the head was. Not really, particularly. I made friends easily and had no hesitancy or compunction about asking whomever I thought would be the most knowledgeable in any area that I wanted

information in and, by and large, was well received by the other members, and helped.

[End Tape 3, Side A]

[Begin Tape 3, Side B]

GIANOS: Let me ask you a hypothetical question. If someone had talked to you six months into your first term in the House and had said, "What are the basic rules of the game as you now have learned them in your first three months or six months?" do you have any idea what they would have been?

CAMERON: Yes. Everybody back there was preaching [former Speaker] Sam Rayburn's philosophy: "If you want to get along, go along." That has never been my disposition, which made it difficult, in some respects. I've always tried to do what I thought was right and that didn't necessarily mean going along. As I indicated, my disagreement with Carl Albert was an extremely costly thing to me, really, but I was right and he was wrong. He shouldn't have done it. I haven't changed. But I knew that those were, basically, the rules of the game, and so you tried not to be--that's one of the things--offensive in being disagreeable, try to do it with a smile and let the other person not raise their hackles more than you absolutely have to.

GIANOS: Did similar things occur with your Foreign Affairs Committee work and, specifically, Vietnam? You were telling a story just awhile ago about having been lied to. Was there a point

at which you began to break with the administration or when you began to get more and more skeptical about that? And did that have any effect on your activities in the House?

CAMERON: I was not dumb. I believed in the domino theory. I thought that Southeast Asia was in severe jeopardy. I may well have been wrong. I saw Morley Safer on a CBS [Columbia Broadcasting System] news program yesterday, on his new book. Hindsight, I suppose, is really good, but I think that the mistakes that we made in Vietnam were political mistakes made here at home. Things could have turned out differently if there hadn't been that great attempt to appease the local constituency. I just have very mixed emotions. The State Department was busy doing their thing. I think, had they been more forthright and honest, they would have gotten more support out of the Congress and things would have gone a lot better. We might have been more successful in accomplishing some sort of rapprochement in Asia that would have been more to our advantage than that, that actually, ultimately happened. That's water over the dam or under the bridge.

GIANOS: Yes. You were in the House during the period of the Kennedy assassination.

CAMERON: I sure was. I was having luncheon at the Dolly Madison Room on the seventh floor of the State Department with Diosdado Macapagal, who was then the president of the Philippines, when we heard the news of the assassination. I remember it very,



very well. In fact, in my office here, there's a curio cabinet, and in the curio cabinet there's a wine glass with the State Department seal on it that I was drinking from at the time I heard of the assassination.

GIANOS: What was it like, as a Democrat, as a citizen, as a member of the House, to go through that period? I'm thinking specifically, now, of just the transition from one administration to another.

CAMERON: There was a reporter whose name was Dick Tracy, who was the assistant managing editor of the San Gabriel Valley Tribune. Dick called me a couple hours after he heard of Kennedy's assassination. I had restrained myself very well up to that point; I had not cried. Dick called and wanted to query me on what my feelings were and what I thought happened. I bawled like a baby. Why? Hate, or the John Birch Society. I'd just gone through the Rousselot campaign, and I was convinced that right-wing extremists were involved in some way. As it turned out, they apparently weren't, except that [Lee Harvey] Oswald certainly fell within that category, as well as being a nut like a lot of them were. But it was a very, very difficult time. My wife was in California. I called her, told her to come on back as fast as she could. We went to the funeral. It was difficult.

I've got to tell you a story. I don't know if I told you about--maybe I did--Lyndon Johnson. You asked about the

transition. Johnson was the consummate politician, obviously. Everybody knows that. The arm twister and all. There was one occasion where my wife and I were going to dinner at the White House, a black tie dinner. It was a state dinner, and I don't remember who the visiting dignitary was at this particular dinner. But we had a vote on the House floor, and it went on and on and on and on. We were supposed to be at the White House. I had to change clothes. I had to go home, change clothes, put on a dinner jacket, and get to the White House. It was very rushed and hurried, and we were among the last guests to arrive. It was a big party. There were probably 150 or 200 people that went through the receiving line with [Claudia Alta] Lady Bird [Johnson] and the president. General Maxwell Taylor, who was the chief of staff at the time, was introducing people to the president in the receiving line. My wife and I walked up, and General Taylor looked at me and said, "I'm terribly sorry, Congressman. I just can't remember your name." I said, "No problem, General. It's Congressman and Mrs. Cameron from California." "Of course. I'm so sorry, Congressman."

There were two or three other people who were still talking with the president. General Taylor and I talked about something that had happened a week or two before, when he had been testifying at the Foreign Affairs Committee. Then, the president was free. I had voted against him, incidentally;

CAMERON: that's part of the story. I had voted against him on what the vote was on the floor forty-five minutes before, and I had been lobbied by Larry O'Brien and everybody else at the White House on that particular vote, because the president really wanted it. So anyhow, General Taylor brought me up to introduce me to the president and Mrs. Johnson. "Mr. President, may I present Congressman Conner and his wife, from California." Lyndon looked at me. He said, "Oh, Ron, you didn't have to change your name just because of that vote today."

GIANOS: [Laughter]

CAMERON: It hadn't been forty-five minutes. You felt like you were watched over by Lyndon.

GIANOS: Yes. That's part and parcel of everything I've ever read about Johnson. From your vantage point in the House and from the point of view of being lobbied by the administration and dealing with the administration people, are there any comparisons between the Kennedy administration and the Johnson administration you feel comfortable making?

CAMERON: Johnson kept on most of the Kennedy administration people.

GIANOS: Right.

CAMERON: So there really wasn't any big change, from that standpoint. Johnson was more intimate with Congress than Kennedy was.

GIANOS: Did you meet Johnson more frequently than you did Kennedy?

CAMERON: Oh, yes. Johnson was more available to the Congress than

Kennedy was. Staffwise, there wasn't any difference. That may not be true, either. It may be that under the Johnson administration, the staff was more responsive to Congress than they were under the Kennedy administration. Of course, under the Kennedy administration, they were newer; they didn't know the ropes as well themselves.

GIANOS: Right. Good point.

CAMERON: Kennedy was never a successful legislator in the House or in the Senate, whereas Lyndon had been a successful legislator in both bodies. He had had the consummate teacher in Sam Rayburn. He was pedagogical in his own right; he was a schoolteacher, so he knew how you learned. So I would say that the Johnson administration was more responsive to individual members' needs but also expected members to follow Sam Rayburn's "If you want to get along, go along." So you had to be very discreet in not going along. I think Lyndon saying to me, "You don't have to change your name," was really, "[I'm] letting you know I'm watching."

GIANOS: What were your relationships like, and to what extent did you have contact with Jack Kennedy?

CAMERON: I don't know. I dined with him on half a dozen occasions where there were not more than eight or ten people present. I was invited to the White House, the big parties, three or four times before he was assassinated.

GIANOS: When you had dinner, was it sort of a Foreign Affairs Committee situation?

CAMERON: No. Two of them happened here in California, one at the Beverly Hilton Hotel. There's a presidential suite there. Before the convention, he was out here, before he was nominated. I was there with him and Gene Wyman, who. . . . I don't know what Gene's title was then. I guess he would be the . . .

GIANOS: Party chairman?

CAMERON: No, he wasn't the chair, because the chair was a gentleman from Marin County, [California]. What the devil was his name? An old, old family in Marin County. I can see him clearly, but I can't think of his name. Oh, yes. It was Roger Kent. Kentfield, California, was named for a family member. I think Gene was finance chairman at that time. I'm trying to think who else was there. There was a guy who is now deceased who was the chairman of the Central Labor Council in Los Angeles, who was at that dinner. Chuck Daley was there.

GIANOS: What are your recollections of those meetings and dinners?

CAMERON: Obviously, I was terribly impressed with Jack Kennedy. He wore that damned corset, and he was in pain all the time and carried it off just gorgeously. To me, he was bigger than life. He walked in the room and the room lit up.

GIANOS: What was his dinner table conversation like? Was it political?

CAMERON: Oh, yes. Political and social and theater and movies and women. It was just a good, boy. . . . I won't say a locker room conversation at all. But he would participate in

anything that anybody wanted to talk about and could contribute to virtually anything that was said and suggested.

GIANOS: I've read that he was a good listener and that he didn't necessarily dominate a conversation. Was that your experience?

CAMERON: Yes. He would participate in everything and contribute, but he did dominate. He dominated by his presence, not by his voice.

GIANOS: What would your complementary recollections be of Lyndon Johnson in similar situations?

CAMERON: Lyndon dominated by voice and gesture and size. I had gone somewhere on a trip; I think it was to Europe. We were flying back to Washington on a KC-135. I was reading a newspaper, Drew Pearson's "Merry-go-round" column. It's saying in there about how all these congressmen were off on junkets. I was looking at the guys that were in the plane with me, and six of them were in there in this column. There were seven of us in the plane, and I was not in the column. "Well, that's a son of a bitch!" So I wrote Drew Pearson a letter. The only time I'd done it before that was when I was about seventeen years old, sixteen, probably. He was speaking, and the organization in Akron, Ohio, that was sponsoring his speech was the League of Women Voters, and my mother was an officer of the League of Women Voters. So I was introduced to Drew Pearson at a reception they had before he spoke. [It was] the only time I'd ever met the man. So this is now fourteen years later,

and I'm flying along in this plane writing a snotty letter telling him that I'm on the trip and, "Why are you leaving me out? You don't need to protect me." As far as I was concerned, what I was doing was of interest to the committee, it was beneficial to me, beneficial to my constituency, beneficial to the country. He wrote a column. "There's one congressman who's honest." [Laughter] And he quoted extensively from my letter, which I got a kick out of.

GIANOS: Do you have reason to believe that he omitted your name because you had met him?

CAMERON: I don't know. Maybe his staff people didn't give it to him.

GIANOS: And you didn't know subsequent to the column recording your letter?

CAMERON: No.

GIANOS: You just didn't show up.

CAMERON: No. So anyhow, Pearson lived in a row house that had been a former slave's quarters in Georgetown. He had a corner house and the house next door to it. He had a pretty good-sized piece of property, for Georgetown. Averell Harriman's house was a block and a half up, which is huge and gorgeous. But anyhow, he invited, I think, three couples to dinner there, and I didn't remember who was invited to the dinner. But anyhow, Connie, my wife, and I were delighted to accept his invitation. He was charming and his wife was charming. We had a grand time. There were eight of us sitting around in

his living room, which wasn't much larger than this room right here. The house, although it was large, was just chopped up into a lot of little rooms. We were sitting there after dinner, just shooting the breeze, talking about what's going on on the Hill and politics in general, what's going to happen down in Florida in the special election. All political talk. The doorbell rings, and in comes Lyndon. He said he was just driving by. He had been up to Averell's house, and he saw Drew's lights were on, so he stopped in to say hello. It was just unannounced completely. He sat down on the couch. I don't remember what the question was that Pearson asked him, but he asked him something about something that was going on in the way of legislation. Lyndon's comment was, "Look at my back. You see those saddle sores? I'm gettin' tired, tired." They'd been riding him all day.

GIANOS: An amazing character.

CAMERON: He really was.

GIANOS: What personality characteristics of his do you recall?

CAMERON: As far as Lyndon's concerned?

GIANOS: Yes.

CAMERON: He was convinced he was always right, no matter what. That's one thing. I think he was convinced he was absolutely right as far as Vietnam was concerned, too. He was convinced that when he resigned, that would help to bring it to a head, which it obviously did. I don't think Richard Nixon was convinced



that he had any solution when he announced during his campaign, "Elect me president, and I'll end the war in Vietnam."

GIANOS: He [Nixon] said so a couple of years [ago]. There was a TV interview a couple of years ago, and he said, "Well, the business about 'I have a secret plan,' that was just a campaign. . . ."

CAMERON: It was obvious it was.

GIANOS: It was said very matter of factly, too. Everybody should have known that, of course, it was a campaign promise.

CAMERON: He's a duplicitous son of a bitch. I'm not talking about Lyndon, now. I'm talking about Richard Nixon.

GIANOS: I understand.

CAMERON: There are a lot of people that would apply that appellation to Lyndon; I would not. I didn't find him duplicitous. In my relationship with him, he was straightforward. He wanted to follow the policy "Go along to get along," but if it didn't work, he'd be right back there next week trying to do it again.

GIANOS: With either Kennedy or Johnson, for that matter, did you do any direct discussion with regard to specific pieces of legislation?

CAMERON: No, I don't think so. That's not true. Lyndon had us over several times, sometimes as a committee, sometimes as individual members. In the family quarters in the White House, the second floor, there's a hallway that runs the full

length of the building, and they use that as a living room type of situation when there's going to be more than half a dozen people. I was there with Lyndon probably ten or twelve times, with anywhere from six to twenty people, where he was lobbying for something that he thought you could be helpful to him with. They were always meetings that Larry O'Brien set up. They would be from four to five-thirty or five-thirty to seven. You would sit around and have cocktails, highballs, and shoot the breeze, and the president would make his pitch. That was the only time. I never had a meeting like that with Kennedy.

GIANOS: How would Johnson make his pitch? Would he speak to everybody?

CAMERON: Yes, and ask questions. "What do you think?" and "What can you do to help me?" and "Isn't this a good program?" and "If it isn't a good program, how shall we change it?" But on a very personal, Ron-Lyndon basis. Only I never said, "Lyndon." I always said, "Mr. President." But it's first name basis with everybody.

GIANOS: Did he mostly work one on one if he were working that room? Or would he give a little presentation to all of you?

CAMERON: Generally, there would be some staff guy there who would say, "You're all familiar with blah-blah-blah, and this is what we want to talk about today. Mr. President, what do you want to say?" He would make the pitch, then he would say to [Ohio Representative] Wayne Hays, "What do you think about that,

Wayne? Isn't that right?" Wayne would say what he thought about it. Then he was looking over, and he'd say, "Dante, do you agree with Wayne?" And [Florida Representative Dante B.] Fascell would say what he thought about it. He was just trying to get things going.

GIANOS: Did you ever see any example of the famous Johnson treatment which I've read so much about?

CAMERON: I thought it was his treatment when he said I didn't have to change my name. How can you feel much more pressure than that?

GIANOS: [Laughter] "We know everything about you, Congressman."

CAMERON: That's right.

GIANOS: With regard to legislation, when you entered the House, was there a specific legislative agenda that you were anxious to pursue?

CAMERON: As I told you, I wasn't interested in going to Congress. I wanted to stay in Sacramento. So I went with [the attitude that] I'm going back there and be as good a congressman as I can and do what I can for California and the country, but with no agenda of any kind.

GIANOS: This might be a good time to talk about--since we're around this period anyway, chronologically--the '64 campaign. What are your recollections of that? In the general, you ran against Frank Walton, it says here. Fifty-five percent for you, 45 percent for him.

CAMERON: I remember that my campaign chairman wouldn't let me use the

best piece of material on Walton. Walton was in the steel pipe business, and he pleaded nolo contendere to a price-fixing situation where he and three other manufacturers of tubing used in oil well casings were guilty of price-fixing. Nobody would let me say anything about that, and I thought that was sort of. . . .

GIANOS: Why was that? Why were you advised not to get into it?

CAMERON: Because it was a nolo contendere plea, so he didn't admit he was guilty. He just said, "I'm not going to put up a defense." I wasn't an attorney then, and all the attorneys told me that that would be dirty pool. I didn't think it was dirty pool, but what the hell? I was going to win anyway, so I let it go. That pissed me off.

GIANOS: [Laughter] That you couldn't use it?

CAMERON: Right.

GIANOS: When you say you were going to win anyway, what led you to the conclusion that you were in pretty good shape, beyond the fact that Lyndon Johnson was also on the ticket in 1964?

CAMERON: There was just a Democratic prevalence at that particular time and, for that matter, in my district at that time. I had the newspapers pretty much on my side. I didn't have the carping against me that I had in the next campaign, when all the El Monte newspapers went so ape against me when they had their mayor running.

GIANOS: How was that campaign in '64 financed? Was it pretty much the same as your previous campaign?

CAMERON: Yes. It wasn't near as easy to finance, I'll tell you, as the one against Rousselot was, because then you had the people who were really concerned about the John Birch Society. Nobody was concerned about Walton. Cameron was going to win, so it was difficult to finance the '64 campaign, as I recall. But not like it is today. We didn't spend the kind of money that they spend today in campaigns.

GIANOS: Do you recall what your major sources were in '64?

CAMERON: It would have been the same as before. There would have been several thousand--two [thousand] or three thousand--contributions of five dollars or less from people in the district. I did get some money out of Washington in the '64 campaign because I was known there. But there's another reason nobody would go on the Foreign Affairs Committee. It's illegal to accept anything from a foreign government, yet there's no way of raising money. That's your only committee, and there's nobody beholden to you. It's a terrible committee, from a politician's standpoint.

GIANOS: So Walton was not much of a threat. Do you recall what his issues against you were?

CAMERON: I only recall that he pled nolo contendere, and I couldn't talk about it. I wouldn't recognize the man if he walked in the door.

GIANOS: Do you recall, generally at least, how much time you spent back in the district campaigning?

CAMERON: Precious little.

GIANOS: Even as the election approached?

CAMERON: I think we were in session until. . . . I'm sure we were in session until late September. I didn't have the money. Now, a member of Congress can fly home as often as he wants to; it's picked up by the Congress. When I was there, I think we got three round trips a year. I'm not certain about that. I know we got two round trips for staff, and I think the members got three round trips. That was it. It's a five-hour flight, plus the three-hour time change, so you've lost a whole day going each direction, really. So there was just precious little time to do it, and I doubt that I was in the district more than. . . . I'd be surprised if it was twenty days between the primary and the general. Congress didn't take summer recesses back in those days. Everybody was trying to get the speaker to agree to summer recesses, but he wouldn't.

Did I tell you the story about Speaker [John W.] McCormack and Sam Rayburn's funeral?

GIANOS: No.

CAMERON: In the private members' dining room--not the big dining room where members can take guests. . . . There's another dining room similar to the speaker's dining room that only members can eat in, and there are probably nine tables in there that seat from four to ten, and there is a kidney shaped table in the corner that's the speaker's table. The speaker generally

goes down and has luncheon there. Members will come in, and if they want to talk to the speaker for some reason, that's a good time to talk to him. So you sit down and have lunch with the speaker. If you haven't got anything you want to talk to him about, you go talk to somebody else you want to talk to. So anyhow, I'd been a member now for six weeks, maybe. Speaker McCormack is sitting there at the table. I walk in. I've never had the temerity, at this point, or any reason to sit down and talk to the speaker. So Wayne Hays was sitting there at the table, and Wayne's on the Foreign Affairs Committee with me. I started to walk by. Wayne says, "Where are you going to eat, Ron?" "I don't know. I'm just looking around." He says, "Well, sit down." So I sat down, and I'm sitting right across from Speaker McCormack. The table almost fills up. It seats ten, I think, and there were probably seven of us sitting there. Wayne's talking about the trip that he just made. He flew back from London, and while he was in London, he'd met whoever those girls were that got involved in the [John] Profumo scandal.

GIANOS: Mandy Rice-Davies and Christine Keeler.

CAMERON: So he's telling us all sorts of things about this. John McCormack said, "I just don't understand you, Wayne." Wayne was saying, "What don't you understand about me?" "All this flying around the country and world you do. All this flying across the ocean you do." He looked at the speaker and says,

"Speaker, have you ever told Ron about Pearl Harbor Day?" He said, "No, I don't think I have." I had never talked to him before other than to shake his hand, "Mr. Speaker" type of thing. "Why don't you tell him?" Wayne asked. The speaker said, "You know, that was a Sunday." "Yes, sir, we know that was a Sunday." He said, "Well, on Sunday my wife and I, we go to church. I'm from Boston." "Yes, we know you're from Boston, John." "We'd been to mass. We were walking up the street arm in arm, talking to people, and people started saying, 'John, have you heard? Have you heard?' I said, 'Have I heard what?' 'Have you heard about the Japanese?' 'What about the Japanese?' 'They bombed Pearl Harbor.' 'No!' 'Yes!' 'Oh, I've got to get back to my apartment.' So as I walked into the apartment, the phone's ringing, and it's [White House aide] Harry Hopkins on the phone. 'Is it John?' 'Yes.' 'We're going to have a meeting first thing tomorrow morning. We need you down here.' 'Now, Harry, I can't get there by tomorrow morning. The train doesn't leave Boston until seven A.M. I can't be there in time for breakfast, but I'll be there around ten-thirty or so, quarter of eleven.' 'The meeting is scheduled for seven, John, and we've got a plane out at Logan Airport and we can get you down here tonight.' 'Now, Harry, I don't think that'll work. Is Sam Rayburn going to be at the meeting tomorrow morning at seven?' 'Yes, Sam'll be there.' 'Fine. You tell Sam what



CAMERON: you want done, and Sam will tell me, and we'll get it done. I'll see Sam about eleven tomorrow. Bye, Harry.' He hangs up. Fifteen minutes later, the phone rings. It's the president [Franklin Roosevelt]. 'Hello, Mr. President, how are you?' 'I'm concerned.' 'I understand. I assume we're going to have a declaration of war.' 'Yes, we are. We're going to have a meeting on it at seven o'clock. So-and-so is coming in, So-and-so is coming in. All the leadership of both houses are going to be here. I want to have breakfast with everybody so we know exactly what we're going to do. I'm calling for a joint session of Congress to convene at noon tomorrow, and I want everything to run like clockwork. I need you here. You're the majority leader in the House and I need you here, John.' 'Mr. President, I understand Sam's going to be there.' 'Yes, Sam will be here.' 'Mr. President, I don't fly, so I've got to take the train, and I can't get a train to get me there by that seven o'clock meeting. So you just tell Sam what you want me to do, and I'll meet with Sam at eleven. We'll have a spot of tea, and he'll explain what he wants me to do. It'll all run smooth, now. You just tell Sam about that. Mr. President, I want you to understand, it's not that I won't fly. It's that I don't fly unless there's an emergency.'"

GIANOS: [Laughter]

CAMERON: The first time and the only time he ever flew in all of his

life was to go to Sam Rayburn's funeral, because he couldn't get there by train.

GIANOS: Meaning it was just impossible in terms of time?

CAMERON: Impossible in terms of time.

GIANOS: I'll be darned. And that was it. Never before and never after?

CAMERON: That's right. He took the train home from the funeral.

GIANOS: Did you get along with McCormack?

CAMERON: Oh, great. Something you've probably forgotten: Ronald Reagan. When he worked all those years for General Electric and made speeches all over the country, he did it by train. He never flew.

GIANOS: I didn't know that.

CAMERON: He absolutely was scared to death to fly. They told him, "You can't run for governor unless you fly." He said, "I'm not going to fly." Finally, during the gubernatorial campaign, they hypnotized him and got him to fly, and that was the very first time he flew in his life.

GIANOS: You mean literally hypnotized him?

CAMERON: To reduce the fear. I believe it was Bill Roberts who insisted on it.

GIANOS: I didn't know that.

CAMERON: A little aside. But that John McCormack story is hysterical. "It's not that I won't fly. It's just that I don't unless there's an emergency."

GIANOS: Sure. He was a careful man. Looking back at the period between '62 and '64, let's say, just in terms of the year of your first term, what are your primary legislative recollections from that period, legislation that you were involved in, voted on?

CAMERON: Absolute frustration. We had more good stuff up there on the Hill in terms of civil rights legislation, and nothing happened. It wasn't until John Kennedy died and Lyndon came in [that] it all just went boom, boom, boom. But there was nothing really accomplished during the year and a half that I was there while Kennedy was president. He was not an effective president.

GIANOS: What was ineffective about him during that period?

CAMERON: He didn't have any rapport with the Congress, the same problem that [President James E.] Jimmy Carter had: no rapport with the Congress.

GIANOS: How would that lack of rapport. . . . I remember you were telling me there was a big fight over the Rules Committee and the Rules Committee was enlarged, and the intent of that was to get his [Kennedy's] legislation at least out on the floor. But you seem to be saying that once it was on the floor, it still didn't have much of a chance. When you say there was no rapport, how would the lack of rapport get communicated to a member? Would it be through staff or through legislative liaison or was it Kennedy himself?

CAMERON: I think there was a great deal of envy on the part of members of Congress of the celebrity status of the president.

GIANOS: This is irrespective of party?

CAMERON: Oh, yes. He just wasn't one of the boys. He didn't lean over and say, "Look at the saddle sores." He didn't have the boys over for tea and cocktails and shoot the breeze with them. There just was not that rapport that made it possible to be effective.

GIANOS: So it sounds as though this is almost an attempt on the part of the House, at least, to say, "We're in this game, too, and we want you to understand that we have power and we're not going to roll over, and perhaps teach you a lesson."

CAMERON: I think there was a lot of that. The boll weevils were still terribly, terribly strong, at that point. Lyndon smote the boll weevils just because he was one himself, and that made a big, big change. Kennedy was Harvard and Choate. That is not the House of Representatives.

GIANOS: Right.

CAMERON: As I say, there may have been enmity there because of that.

GIANOS: That's very interesting. I've never quite heard that put in that way about that period. Were there legislative initiatives you had that you wanted to push?

CAMERON: A freshman? You're kidding.

GIANOS: I'm asking.

CAMERON: I told you, they had to tell me where the head was. Anybody

dumb enough to get on the Foreign Affairs Committee is not going to have a legislative agenda.

GIANOS: So you didn't even consider any kind of legislative agenda?

CAMERON: I put in one bill, which is now law, and that was an outgrowth of my experience in the California legislature. I told you I refused to go to make quorum calls and all those lousy votes that took one to three hours out of your day. My solution was to put in electronic voting, so I put in a bill, and the Library of Congress did a study on electronic voting. I was pooh-poohed by everybody back there. They continued with the roll call, and the roll call took a minimum of forty minutes to read the roll twice in the House. You didn't start to read it until ten minutes after the bells had rung so members could get there, so you were looking, for the first vote. . . . What they do is, you have a quorum call before we have a vote on the bill. Then, you have a vote on the bill, then a vote on reconsideration. So the first vote takes an hour. The second vote takes forty minutes. The third vote takes thirty-five minutes. You're looking at two hours and a half for doing nothing but standing around sucking your thumb and saying either "Aye" or "Nay" three times. That's the most ridiculous thing I ever heard of. So I did have a piece of legislation on that, and it went absolutely nowhere. It was picked up about four years after I left there. Of course, they have electronic voting now. You have a plastic card that

looks like a credit card or teller card that you vote with.

You walk in and stick it in the box, and you walk out.

GIANOS: So you did have a legislative agenda.

CAMERON: Yes. I ought to be paid for the number of hours that I saved those guys.

GIANOS: I had that very thought myself. It's millions of hours over the years that would otherwise have been wasted.

[End Tape 3, Side B]

[Session 4, August 14, 1990]

[Begin Tape 4, Side A]

GIANOS: Let me ask you a background question relative to the '66 election. You mentioned before that your committee assignments and such didn't do you a whole lot of good back home with your constituents.

CAMERON: They didn't do any good.

GIANOS: Did you have any intimations going into the '66 election that you might be in trouble back home?

CAMERON: I should have had, but didn't. I didn't have any real problem as far as the primary was concerned. As I recall, I didn't get back. . . . When Congress adjourned in '66, it was late September or early October. I was only home before the election for a very limited period of time. I came back two or three times after the primary and before the Congress adjourned, as I recall. But I had no sense of impending doom or anything like that. My opponent in the Republican party was a chap named Charles [E.] Wiggins, who was then mayor of the city of El Monte. He was an attorney in El Monte. He had sued me several years previously. The suit involved a political mailing for which he was serving an injunction on behalf of the Republican party.

I had no sense of impending doom other than the damned El Monte Herald that kept beating me over the head every day.

Well, not every day, because it was only two times a week that that paper was published. I had previously refused to sponsor a congratulatory resolution for the publisher of the paper based on his length of service. The paper was a miserable right-wing propaganda sheet, from my perspective. I assume that had some bearing on why the paper was so difficult and so hard on me. They never had a kind word to say about me, and they had several pictures of Wiggins and laudatory things to say about him in each issue. El Monte probably had 70 percent Democratic registration, and I think Wiggins took 70 percent of the vote in that area, the area where that particular newspaper had good circulation. I lost the election, really, in El Monte. I didn't realize. I was shocked, frankly. It was four o'clock in the morning when I realized that I had lost the election. I couldn't believe it. How could that happen to a nice guy like me? It was probably the best thing that ever happened to me, but I didn't think so at the time.

GIANOS: Were there particularly dominant issues in that campaign?

CAMERON: The real dominant issue was Pat Brown. I was one of the few Democrats who was running with Pat Brown and supporting Pat Brown. Ronald Reagan was the big issue in the election. He won overwhelmingly, actually. Wiggins copied the technique I had used two years previously. I thought he was very clever



to use it, but had no idea how successful it would be. I think I mentioned previously that I reprinted a letter from John Kennedy on White House stationery that he had sent to me. I sent copies of it to everybody in the district. Well, Wiggins copied me. He did the same thing, only it was a telegram addressed to him that he reproduced. It was a telegram from Ronald Reagan to him, saying how much he would need Wiggins's support in Congress while he was governor. A friend of mine, Tom Rees, who was a congressman, and I had been seatmates in Sacramento during our previous years in the assembly. He was the one that Jesse Unruh assigned to me to straighten me out. Tom called me and told me that Wiggins had this piece of mail that was going to go out and I ought to get an injunction against it. I said, "Come on, Tom, that's funny. He's just copying what I did four years ago." It was effective.

GIANOS: You're raising two interesting things about that race. One is the El Monte situation and then the other is whatever coattails Ronald Reagan might have had. Was it your impression that the coattails were also a part of what happened to you in '66?

CAMERON: Oh, yes. The combination of the two. If the El Monte paper hadn't been so vehemently against me and/or I hadn't been running with Pat Brown and encouraging all my workers to work for Pat Brown, I think we would have won the election. It was

a combination of those two. I think I only lost the election by a few percentage points. It was really close.

GIANOS: I think it was almost the same order of magnitude as your previous wins in L.A.

CAMERON: It wasn't overwhelming.

GIANOS: What was behind your decision to support Pat Brown so actively and visibly, when it was conceivably harmful to you?

CAMERON: Because I'm a Democrat and I believe in supporting the philosophy of the Democratic party. I thought Pat Brown had been a good governor, and I thought he was being maligned. I thought Ronald Reagan would make a lousy governor, and he did. There's just no question about that.

My wife got a phone call a couple of nights ago. She's an archaeologist at California State [University], Fullerton. I don't know what the name of the commission is, but there's a commission that has to do with antiquities, and they really want an archaeologist on this [commission]. It's a gubernatorial commission. An archaeologist resigned, and that particular archaeologist who'd resigned recommended my wife. So she received a phone call from the chairman of the commission who was to make a recommendation to Governor [George] Deukmejian. They talked for forty minutes, and the person was terribly impressed with my wife's vita and her knowledge not only of California but of archaeology and antiquities all over the world. He was really just

delighted. He said, "I'm so glad that we found you. I'm going to recommend you to the governor. By the way, you are a registered Republican, aren't you?" My wife said, "No, I'm a registered Democrat." He said, "But for long?" "My entire life." "Could you reregister?" My wife said, "No." "Oh. I can't recommend you to Governor Deukmejian. He would never approve of you." That's the difference between Republicans and Democrats. You look at Brown's appointees. They're pretty well balanced between Republicans and Democrats. No way with Deukmejian; no way with Reagan. They're both SOB's.

[Laughter]

GIANOS: To put the matter gently.

CAMERON: Yes.

GIANOS: Were you advised by people during the '66 race to back off on supporting Pat Brown?

CAMERON: Oh, absolutely. Everybody advised me to, yes. There weren't any congressmen who were supporting the governor; the governor was running all by himself in 1966. Everybody looked at the polls and saw Reagan was so far ahead. It was sad, I think.

GIANOS: So Reagan and Brown were kind of the surrogate issues in 1966.

CAMERON: Oh, yes.

GIANOS: Were there any other issues that were secondary to that?

CAMERON: Of course, Vietnam was going on, and that was a significant issue. There were an awful lot of Democrats. . . . Again, that's my Foreign Affairs Committee position. I was

supportive of Lyndon Johnson and what we were doing in Vietnam at the time. That was another issue. I don't think that issue was the dominant issue, as far as I'm concerned, as far as my election was concerned, because Wiggins had exactly the same position on Vietnam that I had. So that couldn't have been the dominant thing.

GIANOS: But you had no real primary opposition.<sup>1</sup>

CAMERON: I don't recall. I'm sure there was some, but I don't recall.

GIANOS: Inconsequential.

CAMERON: As far as I'm concerned, it was, as far as I remember. Because that was a long time ago. Maybe I'm wrong.

GIANOS: But at 4:00 A.M., when you discovered you'd lost . . .

CAMERON: Ben Hite was the name of the registrar of voters in Los Angeles County at that time, and Bob [Robert] Moretti, who became speaker of the assembly after Jesse Unruh left the assembly, was in Ben Hite's office. The last figures I'd seen were around one o'clock, and I saw what was going on in El Monte, and I became concerned at that point because Reagan was so heavily ahead in El Monte. I went home and had a cup of coffee. Around four o'clock in the morning, I called Ben Hite's office to see what the tabulation was, and Bob Moretti answered Ben Hite's phone. I didn't know he was there. I

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1. Cameron ran unopposed in the Democratic primary. Wiggins ran against James R. Cotton. California Statement of Vote (June 1966): 15.

said, "This is Ron Cameron, and I'd like to know what the tabulation is at this point on the Twenty-fifth [Congressional District]." Moretti says, "I'm sorry, Ron, but you're down the tube." I said, "Who's this?" "Moretti." "How bad is it?" "Well, you're behind by 1,800 votes, something like that, and it's been building since midnight and you're not picking any of it up." I said, "Robert, I'm going to go to bed." He says, "Good luck." And that was the end of that conversation--pretty short.

GIANOS: So you were shocked.

CAMERON: A tear or two. I was scheduled to leave on a trip I would like to have taken. I was scheduled to chair a fact-finding committee. I don't know what all the countries were, at this point. But Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Palestine--the whole Middle East area. [There were] nine congressmen, and I was the chair of the group. We were scheduled to leave four days after the election. So the day after the election, I decided that it didn't make any sense for me to take this trip. I wasn't going to be in Congress to be able to get any benefit from any reports that we might write and act on. So I called Dr. Morgan. He was a medical doctor from Pittsburgh. He was chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, and I called him and I told him that I was going to resign from the chairmanship of this fact-finding committee. He said, "Why?" I said, "Because I lost the election." "What's that got to do

with it?" I said, "Really, I don't feel it would be appropriate for me to write a report and then not be able to be there to implement whatever recommendations that I might have as a result of this." So we talked. He said, "Think about it and call me back." I didn't bother to think about it and call him back. I called the--what the dickens do you call him?--the chief counsel for the committee and told him that I was resigning and that I'd lost the election and I did not want to chair that particular trip. He understood my position. So Edward Roybal, who is a congressman from east Los Angeles took my place.

GIANOS: You don't remember Dr. Morgan's first name, do you?

CAMERON: No. We called him "Doc." He was the only medical doctor who was a member of the House of Representatives at the time. Anybody who had anything wrong with him, Republican or Democrat, would come see "Doc" Morgan, and he'd treat and prescribe all day long. It's handy to have somebody like that around; it's nice. And he was an exceptionally well-liked member, not only as a physician but as a person.

GIANOS: So you resigned from the committee. What sorts of things does one do, to use the old term for it, as a "lame duck"?

CAMERON: There wasn't an awful lot to do. The day after I lost, or the day after that--I'm not sure, but within twenty-four hours of the time I realized that I had lost--I called Charlie Wiggins. That was the first thing the next day, and I talked

to him and invited him over to the office. I had an office at the corner of Painter and La Cuarta in Whittier at that time and invited Charlie over to tell him what I had been doing and offered him any help that I could in things that involved his representing the district.

The next day, I called the real estate broker who had sold us our house back in Alexandria, Virginia, and listed the house for sale with her over the telephone. My wife and I flew back to Washington ten days after that and had a garage sale, selling all of the stuff that we had in the house. It was really fun. I guess by now it was December 1, and those things that we were not going to bring back to California. . . . We had a four-bedroom house completely furnished back there. We had a sale. We advertised in the local newspaper that the sale was going to start at nine o'clock on a Saturday morning or something like that. We had people lined up at six o'clock in the morning, banging on the door and trying to get in. Anyhow, we sold off an awful lot of stuff; we brought very little back to California. We sold the house and moved back to California. We drove back. When we were back in California. . . .

You know, I closed the office and did all the things I had to do in terms of closing the office and trying to find my staff--I had four employees--jobs for them with other people. We were back in California two or three days before school was

CAMERON: out, so that would have been December 16 or 17. We packed the family up and went to San Miguel de Allende in Mexico for Christmas. My wife and I had been down there a couple of times before and had enjoyed it, and the kids had never been there, so we decided to spend Christmas down there. We didn't come back until about the tenth or twelfth of January. Our kids were out of school for about two weeks, I think.

GIANOS: Did you and Wiggins get along in terms of the transition period?

CAMERON: Yes. We never had any hostility. We were never friendly, and things really kind of galled me when. . . . He came over to my office and we talked, and I suggested different things and told him how things worked in Washington. He didn't know any more about it than I did when I first went there, and I tried to help him out. Wiggins is a big golfer. Although I play golf, it's certainly not an obsession with me. Once a year or twice a year I might play golf, and I haven't played now for ten years. Wiggins wanted to know if I knew how he could get into Burning Tree Country Club to play; he wanted to play that course. That was the thing he was most concerned about. I was terribly unimpressed. He was unconcerned about pending constituent problems.

GIANOS: When you came back from Mexico, what were your plans subsequent to that?

CAMERON: I didn't have any real plans. I was certain that I didn't



want to go back into accounting, and I just kind of goofed off for sixty, ninety days, I guess. I had a lot of odds and ends that had to be cleaned up in terms of constituent problems that I had been working on and that sort of thing. I decided that, come summer, we were going to go back to San Miguel again and spend the summer down there. I was doing some writing, and I was just busy unwinding. A friend of mine suggested that I become a stockbroker. I didn't want to do that. School was out, and I really had not done anything for six months. When we were down in San Miguel, I did some writing and some thinking and some sculpting. The kids went to the art institute down there, and we all studied Spanish. They were much more successful in accomplishing a fluency in Spanish than I. I don't know, my mind wasn't on it, I guess. So we spent the summer down there. We thought very seriously about buying a house that we had rented. I told the woman that if she ever wanted to sell it, to please call me, because it was a really a neat house. She did call me about a year later and wanted to sell it and was willing to sell it on incredibly attractive terms: 6 percent interest. She wanted \$25,000 for it. I said I'd call her back the next morning. I talked to my wife about it. My wife said, "If you buy the house, you're going to want to go down there." "Yes, of course." She said, "Well, if you do that, you're going to be kind of a bum. There are a lot of bums down there." "You're

CAMERON: probably right." So I didn't buy the house. It think it's probably worth \$1 million today. I should have bought it.

We came back from San Miguel in September, when the kids started back to school. My friend importuned upon me again. He said, "You really should become a stockbroker." So I went to work for Shearson, Hamill & Company. I went back to New York City and was there for several months of school at the New York Institute of Finance. Being a stockbroker was an occupation in which I could not survive. I think it's basically dishonest. They don't tell you they're dishonest, and they're not, but they're such supersalesmen that they do stretch the truth a bit, it seems to me. After I graduated I came back, and the only consistent client I had was myself.

GIANOS: [Laughter]

CAMERON: I did a good deal of trading. I made some money out of it, but I couldn't solicit people, in good conscience, to represent them as a broker. If somebody wanted to buy or sell something on their own initiative, I'd handle it for them, but I wasn't about to go out and sell securities. So I was only with them for a very short period of time--six months in school and two months after that, four months after that--and I couldn't take it anymore; I quit. By that time, it was getting on to election time again. I was involved in the 1968 election supporting other candidates and worked for Hubert Horatio Humphrey. I don't know who all I was working for,

come to think of it, but I know I was very active in terms of supporting other candidates in the Democratic party.

GIANOS: Was it mostly local candidates?

CAMERON: No. I was highly involved in the national campaign, too. I'm trying to think, now. I don't even remember. Nineteen sixty-eight. . . . Hubert Humphrey.

GIANOS: This is during the general or the primary?

CAMERON: The primary and general both.

GIANOS: That was [the primary between] [U.S. Senator Eugene] Gene McCarthy and Bob Kennedy.

CAMERON: No. During the primary, I was in New York. When Bob Kennedy was killed, I was in New York. [Inaudible] I wasn't involved in the primary, only the general election. I've got a blank here, Phil. I can't recall.

GIANOS: Fair enough. Subsequent, then, to '68, having dropped out as a stockbroker, what was next?

CAMERON: I can tell you what happened after 1970, when I ran for controller. I've just got an incredible blank here from '67 to '70. I obviously was doing something to earn a living, but I don't remember what it was.

GIANOS: Let's just jump ahead, then, to the controller's race. What led up to that?

CAMERON: I thought I was the best qualified person to be controller, so I unilaterally decided to run. I didn't have any particular support from party people and real opposition from some party people.

GIANOS: On what basis were you opposed?

CAMERON: On the basis that I wasn't a Chicano. Jesse Unruh wanted a Chicano on the ticket in November, and he picked out everybody to run with him. Because he was running for governor, he had decided who was going to run with him. Verne Orr subsequently became director of [the Department of] Motor Vehicles. But anyhow, Jesse had picked him out to be the candidate for controller, and he tried to talk me out of running. I said, "No, Ernie wasn't qualified to be controller," and I was going to run. Jesse said, "You know, when I'm elected governor, you can do this and you can do that." I said, "No. No, Jesse. You're not going to tell me who's going to run for controller. I'm going to run."

GIANOS: Meaning Unruh promised to do you favors if you didn't run for controller?

CAMERON: Right. So anyhow, I ran and was nominated. I think Bert [A.] Betts was in that race, too. Bert had been treasurer of California. I'm almost positive that Bert was in the race. I was in the race, and Henry F. something. There were three of us.<sup>1</sup> I ended up with the largest vote in the primary and, obviously, didn't win the general. None of us won in the

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1. Cameron, John R. Dean, and Herman Sillas were the candidates in the 1970 Democratic primary race for state controller. California Statement of Vote (June 1970): 10.

general election. John [V.] Tunney lost his senate seat that year in the general election.

GIANOS: How did you run in the primary against other Democrats?

CAMERON: With very, very little money. I had a fairly decent name recognition, and I wandered around the state and talked to newspapers. It was a very low-key campaign. Campaigns were a lot less expensive in those days, although mine was ridiculous. I don't know. I think something like \$10,000, was spent, and that was mostly in transportation. Talking to newspapers and getting as much publicity as you could. Plus the fact that there were three people in the race made it certainly in my favor. I don't know what the vote was.<sup>1</sup> But I had a white Anglo-Saxon name and certified public accountant was my ballot title, and that sounds like a controller.

GIANOS: Did you run, basically, on that kind of platform: "I am a trained CPA"?

CAMERON: Right. "I've got political experience; I've been a congressman as well as an assemblyman; I know how to keep a set of books; I'm a responsible fellow; and that's what you want for somebody to manage your money" was basically the thrust of the campaign. I didn't make any outlandish promises

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1. The final vote in the 1970 Democratic primary for the office of state controller was: Cameron, 996,774; Dean, 493,360; and Sillas, 596,207. California Statement of Vote (June 1970): 10.

and told them I'd do the best kind of job I could. Who knows why people vote for somebody?

GIANOS: How much of your motivation was a desire to just get back into politics?

CAMERON: Probably 90 percent.

GIANOS: So you found that you really missed it after a few years away from it and wanted to get back?

CAMERON: Yes, I wanted to get back; I really did want to go back, at that point. I'm glad that it didn't happen. The day following the [general] election, when we had lost . . .

GIANOS: Against [Houston I.] Hugh Flournoy, right?

CAMERON: Yes.

GIANOS: With whom you'd served in the assembly.

CAMERON: Yes.

GIANOS: Before you get after '70, what were your impressions in the legislature of Flournoy? Did it make any difference in running against him that you had known each other?

CAMERON: No, not really. Hugh was, and is, for that matter, a very competent, sincere, capable guy. I don't think he had the background that a controller really should have for that specifically. It really probably doesn't make that much difference, because the office has so much staff. But it becomes an administrative position, hiring and firing a lot of people, more than being competent to deal with debits and credits, which was what I would be selling. But no, Hugh

Flournoy was a very honorable guy. When we were first in the assembly, somebody arranged a bus ride to Reno, and there were probably twenty assemblymen and ten or fifteen staff people and friends that took this bus ride over to Reno. I think it was on a Saturday night, and we came back Sunday morning, got back into Sacramento at three or four o'clock on Sunday morning. Hugh and I sat next to each other on that bus ride, and we had a very enjoyable time. Socializing type things. Hugh lived in Claremont, [California]. I think he had been on the faculty at Pomona College. But that's the most time I ever spent with him, when we sat on the bus together for three hours going one way and three hours the other way and commiserating and talking and sharing. A very pleasant guy.

GIANOS: My recollection of the '70 race statewide is that Ronald Reagan ran on what was called a "Team Seventy," and there was a really concerted effort on his part, as there was on Unruh's, to elect a whole slate of people.

CAMERON: Absolutely.

GIANOS: Did that carry over into yours and Flournoy's campaigns? Cameron versus Flournoy was sort of Unruh versus Reagan?

CAMERON: That's all it was. And Unruh was not supportive of Cameron. Unruh's slate fell apart because I was there. To the day he died, he begrudged me that. I didn't begrudge him anything. But Jesse and I were never really friendly after 1970. He seemed hostile to me even though we had been friends before

and I still considered myself to be his friend. He was a very unique man and deserves credit for the political system in California; he did a lot for us.

GIANOS: But after 1970 . . .

CAMERON: Cameron didn't exist.

GIANOS: Were you the biggest monkey wrench in 1970 in his plans.

CAMERON: I wasn't a monkey wrench at all.

GIANOS: As far as he was concerned.

CAMERON: As far as he was concerned, yes.

GIANOS: Everything else would have been just dandy had you not won the primary?

CAMERON: Oh, yes, no question about that.

GIANOS: Were you surprised at the outcome of your race?

CAMERON: Not really. Reagan just went like gang busters. I wasn't surprised. I probably was surprised that I won the primary. He [Unruh] couldn't believe it. [Laughter] I don't recall, but I'm sure I was.

GIANOS: You said a moment ago that, as it turned out, having lost in '70 was a good thing. At least, I think that's what you were saying.

CAMERON: Yes. It was a day or two after the November election, I said to my wife. . . . Back in 1951, somewhere back there, I'd started law school at Southwestern University and I ran into a real problem with Dean Parker. His family owned the university at that point; it's now an accredited institution,



but it wasn't then. Parker was running a shop down there to raise money. He wanted to raise money off the school. I ended up in a real battle with him and decided, "To hell with it." I didn't want this, and I quit. In 1970, after the election a couple of days, I said to my wife, "I really should go on to law school." She said, "Ron, either enroll in law school today or never say that to me again. I don't want to hear it again." "Well, I better make up my mind whether I really mean this or not." At that point, Paul Egly, who was a friend of mine, was then a superior court judge and the judge who was handling all the school integration problems in L.A. County at that point, after [Judge Alfred] Gitelson died. Judge Gitelson had it originally, and when he died, Paul took it over. Paul had started the La Verne College of Law at La Verne University. I had lunch with Paul in the courthouse in downtown L.A. a couple of days after the general election. I told him that I wanted to go to law school. Paul said, "I told you you should do that twenty-five years ago."

GIANOS: This is about what, 1971?

CAMERON: No, it's still '70. It would have been in November of '70. He said, "Go out and see So-and-so out in La Verne, and you can start at the law school tonight." They weren't running a day school; they only had a night school. Of course, they were several weeks into the semester. But they were a nonaccredited school at that point, so they could get away

with doing what they wanted. So I started law school that night. I finished a semester there; I had nine units, six or nine units that I completed there at La Verne. In February, I transferred to Pepperdine University School of Law.

Pepperdine had recently purchased the school from another friend of mine, who was Vincent Dalsimer, who was then a superior court judge and subsequently became an appellate justice. He is now retired from the bench. He originally started Orange College of Law, which Pepperdine [University] eventually took over.

GIANOS: Could you spell . . . .

CAMERON: D-A-L-S-I-M-E-R, Vincent S. Dalsimer.

[End Tape 4, Side A]

[Begin Tape 4, Side B]

GIANOS: You said when you were in Mexico you had written. Was that fiction, nonfiction, or memoirs?

CAMERON: Nonsense. [Laughter]

GIANOS: Nonsense! That's nice.

CAMERON: No, I was writing poetry, and it wasn't all that good poetry. It was satisfying to me, but it's not a thing that I would share with people.

GIANOS: Back to law school. So after law school, were you considering what sort of law you wanted to practice?

CAMERON: No. Just to get the feel and see what happens. Life has been very good to me. In today's funny papers there's a good thing.

It says, "The years have been very good to me, but the weeks and months sometimes have been unkind." [Laughter] That well describes my life. The years have been good to me. I had a law practice. It sort of evolved from friendships. Once I started to practice, I just sent out a bunch of announcements to everybody I knew, and business started to come in.

Obviously, the practice had been primarily in business-oriented types of activities, because that's where my friendships were. And that's what I know best from having been a CPA for thirty-five years and having owned and operated a lot of businesses during my life. That's part of what I did [between 1967 and 1970]. My dad was in the metal fabricating business. Between '67 and '70, I did a lot of work for him, not as an employee, but just odds-and-ends type of stuff. My son was an employee of my father during that period of time. My son still is in the metal fabricating business, only he's in Sacramento now. My dad's gone. I was sort of a man of leisure, I guess, during that period of time. I'm trying to get to be one again.

GIANOS: After '70, did the desire to get involved in politics ever come back? Has it come back since?

CAMERON: No. I try to make contributions to political campaigns, and I support people, and I'm very, very hopeful that Dianne Feinstein is going to be nominated for governor. But I have not had a real desire to get involved. When I said Jesse

Unruh. . . . I consider him to have been an asset to California. In even more crude terms, Jesse's philosophy was, as far as lobbyists were concerned, that you had to be able to take their money and drink their booze and smoke their cigars--with much crudity he added something in there also--and at the same time, vote against them. And if you can't do that, you don't belong in politics. I subscribe to that philosophy that you have to vote your conscience, but you have to have their money to get elected. You didn't have to have it in such great quantities as you have to have it today. I would have no problem in serving in public office again, except that I could not go through what these guys are going through now, in terms of fund raising activities. There are just too damned many of them. I don't want to say they're selling their votes, but it sure as hell gives that impression. I couldn't get involved in that; I never have and never would. I mentioned before everybody always knew that if the vote was 432 to 2, that Cameron would be one of those 2, me and Jimmy Utt.

GIANOS: It seems to follow from what you're saying, just to sum things up, that your view of politics in this state is that it's changed fairly significantly.

CAMERON: I think dramatically. I think we would be infinitely better off if we went back to what the situation was when I was there, and that is that you have a citizen politician. Now,

you have a professional politician. That's one thing that Jesse should be scored for and that is making the legislature a full-time job. Jesse was primarily responsible for that. During the time that I was in Sacramento, the legislature met for 120 days one year and 30 days the next year. We had extraordinary sessions; the governor could call a session and that sort of thing. But we managed to get the state's business done and done on time. I think it could be done in that amount of time today, and legislators could be more in tune and involved with local constituencies and wouldn't cost so much money, and they wouldn't be professionals. I used to say that I was always considered to be an honorable person until I became a legislator, and when I was a legislator, I was called "Honorable," but thought to be dishonorable. I think that is personified in spades today. I was kind of facetious about it back in the old days. There's a general perception of the population today that politics is evil, and it isn't. But we're not doing those things that we need to to change that perception, it doesn't seem to me. All of the people who are being elected to office are not, in my opinion, as capable as they were. There's an obvious bias from my standpoint.

GIANOS: So for you today, as a former politician who doesn't regret not being in politics. . . .

CAMERON: No, I don't at all. Life is good. The years have been good

to me. Sometimes the weeks and months are bad, but the years  
are good.

[End Tape 4, Side B]

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